Heroes of the Covenant

"James Renwick"

By Rev. W. H. Carslaw M.A.

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Heroes of the covenant

Life & Times of James Renwick, M.A.

MONIAIVE FROM CRICHAN, LOOKING N.-E.

HEROES OF THE COVENANT

Life and Times of

James Renwick, M.A.,

BY

REV. W. H. CARSLAW, M.A.

HELENSBURGH

EDITOR OF *The Scots Worthies*, ETC.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

EVER since I completed my Illustrated Edition of the *Scots Worthies*, which has had a very wide circulation in this country and America, I have wished to cover the period of the Covenanting struggle in Scotland with three representative Lives, partly because of their own biographical interest, but chiefly in the hope of thereby helping to perpetuate the memory of a life and death struggle for civil and religious liberty. This desire has at length been gratified through the publication of Guthrie, Cargill, and Renwick, which, though separate and independent Lives, must be read together, if we would have a connected view of this period of the history of our Church and nation.

Some years ago, when I edited Renwick's Letters, while thankful for the opportunity of presenting these in full, I was afraid that the excessive length and involved style of some

of them would not enhance their popularity. This time I have contented myself with only a few extracts, and these generally of a personal character. The *Informatory Vindication*, also, which has been described as Renwick's masterpiece, has been given in a very abridged form. For the Illustrations in this volume we are indebted to the Rev. Thomas Kidd, M.A., of Moniaive, to whom we tender our hearty acknowledgments.

W. H. CARSLAW.

OCTOBER, 1900.

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HEROES OF THE SCOTTISH COVENANT.

JAMES RENWICK.

CHAPTER I.

Early life—Studies at Edinburgh and Groningen—Ordination.

WHEREVER, says Balzac, in any age there is found in the midst of a nation a body of people drawn apart from others, history nearly always finds among them some principal personage, who illustrates the virtues and the defects of the society to which he belongs. This identity between a man and his historical surroundings belongs to the nature of things. To lead a party we must be in sympathy with its ideas; to shine in an epoch we must fully reflect it.

To do justice, therefore, to the subject of this memoir, whom Carlyle describes as "The Last of the Cameronians," adding in his own peculiar way,

"Renwick was the name of him: honour to the name of the brave!" let us glance for a moment at the period which immediately preceded the Revolution, and note some of its principal features. Sir George Mackenzie, who was King's Advocate from 1677, holds a place of special abhorrence among those persecutors, whose names, according to Lord Macaulay, are mentioned "with a peculiar energy of hatred wherever the Scottish race is found on the surface of the globe." "What, Sir, wad ye speak to me," said Davie Deans, when a neighbour had suggested a relative of Mackenzie as a suitable lawyer for poor Effie's plea, "about a man that has the bluid of the saints at his finger-ends? Didna his eme (uncle) dee and gang to his place wi' the name o' the Bluidy Mackenzie? And winna he be kenn'd by that name sae lang as there's a Scots tongue to speak the word?" In his "Vindication of the Government in Scotland during the reign of King Charles II.," Sir George Mackenzie, this able but unscrupulous advocate, employs all the ingenuity at his disposal in seeking to throw dust in our eyes, and thereby to blind us to the nature and issues of the Covenanting struggle. Among other things he confesses his surprise "that the Government is taxed with so much cruelty, and the Acts themselves reproached as diabolical," and he declares that "the Acts made against Field Con-

venticles were the necessary product of new accessional degrees of rebellion, and were not punishments designed against opinions in religion, but merely against treasonable combinations," adding with unblushing effrontery that "no man in Scotland ever suffered for his religion." He claims the sending away of multitudes to the Plantations as "an act of clemency, not of cruelty;" and, after defending the long detention of others in prison on the ground that there was no Habeas Corpus Act in Scotland, he winds up his special pleading with this extraordinary remark, "To shew the clemency of the Government, strangers would be pleased to consider that though above twenty thousand had been guilty of rebellion, yet two hundred died not by the Criminal Court, and above one hundred and fifty of these might have saved their lives by saying God bless the King." No wonder that, in his Answer* to this "Vindication" a "Lover of Truth" should express his surprise that "a person who was as much dipt as any in those arbitrary proceedings should aspire to impose thus far on the world; and more, that any should be so credulous as to receive as truths what the passion our author discovers throughout the whole pamphlet plainly declares how unlikely he was to give a

* Printed for Edward Golding, London, 1692.

true relation of." Those who have followed us in our delineation of the *Life and Times of Guthrie* and *Cargill* * do not need to be informed how heartily we endorse the views thus emphatically expressed by this anonymous writer, and how much we regret that the present ignorance and religious indifference of many of our countrymen should make it possible for any justification or defence of the arbitrary and oppressive measures of the Stuart dynasty to obtain even a respectful hearing. On the day following Cargill's execution, James, Duke of York, an avowed Papist, who two years before by the King's command had been admitted to the Privy Council without taking the oath, presided over a Parliament at Holyrood, which secured for him the right of succession contrary to law, while it imposed on all other holders of public offices a Test, which subsequently proved a bone of contention and an instrument of cruel oppression. From this obligation "the King's lawful brother and sons" were expressly exempted, while the Earl of Argyll, because he refused to take the oath without explanation, was prosecuted for high treason, and finally obliged to escape to Holland. So threatening indeed became the character of the times that

* *Heroes of the Covenant*, Vols. I. and II., by the Rev. W. H. Carslaw, M.A.

MONIAIVE, LOOKING S.-W.

a number of eminent men took steps to provide a refuge for themselves and others across the seas by founding a colony in Carolina. Cameron and Cargill were now gone, and with them the cause of liberty seemed to have expired. When curates were ordered to send to their bishops lists of absentees from public worship, which lists were to be forwarded at once to the magistrate that he might prosecute the defaulters with the utmost rigour of the law, it seemed impossible for any to escape. We cannot agree with a recent writer when referring to this period he says that the persecution was "not fiery, but merely vexatious and irritating."* On the contrary, it appears to us so hot and fiery that few were able to withstand it openly, and those in power began to think that their efforts would after all be crowned with success. They made a solitude, and called it peace. But the blood of the martyrs has ever been the seed of the Church, and God was even now preparing one of his servants to raise aloft the blood-stained banner which had fallen from the hands of Cameron and Cargill.

Moniaive, where James Renwick was born on the 15th February, 1662, is situated in the

* *Social Condition of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*, Vol. II., p. 10.

parish of Glencairn in Dumfries-shire. This parish, which is about fifteen miles long and three and a-half broad, is bounded on the south by the still more famous parish of Dunscore, which contains within its borders the farms of Craigenputtoch and Ellisland, and is also associated with Grierson of Lag, one of the most cruel of the persecutors. In the seventeenth century nothing was more characteristic of the southern counties of Scotland than their bare and treeless condition. Sir Anthony Weldon, who in 1617 attended James VI. on his northern journey, protested that Judas would scarcely have got a tree to hang himself on if he had betrayed his Lord in Scotland; and Sir William Brereton in 1636 declares that he had "diligently observed but cannot see any timber in riding one hundred miles." There were "pleasant woods and policies" passed by Kirke in 1677 on his way to Edinburgh, and clumps of trees about the mansions, though "not a tree in any part of the country elsewhere." Even in 1753 Goldsmith had nothing to say of the characteristic features of Scottish scenery except that "hills and rocks intercept every prospect." Drumlanrig Castle in Nithsdale he compares to a fine picture in a dirty grotto, "environed with mountains which have the wildest and most hideous aspect of any in all the south part of Scotland." Indeed, if we

MARKET CROSS OF MONIAIVE.

may trust the opinions of these and other writers regarding Lowland Scottish scenery, we need not wonder at the assertion of Dr. Samuel Johnson that "a tree in Scotland is as rare as a horse in Venice," or at the words of the poet Cleveland—

> "Had Cain been Scot, God had ne'er changed his doom,
> Not made him wander, but confined him home."

In this respect the parish of Glencairn was not more highly favoured than its neighbours, and yet it would be wrong to speak of it as destitute of all external beauty. The upper district is traversed by three valleys, each extending to about six miles in length, while these again are watered by three streams which meet a little below the village of Moniaive and flow together in a south-east direction till they unite with the Nith about a mile above Dumfries. In the centre of the village stands a stone pillar, fourteen feet high, which appears to have been erected in 1638, when a charter was granted constituting Moniaive "a burgh of barony," and conferring on it power to hold a weekly market. Another monument, nearly twice as high, was erected in 1828 to the memory of Renwick, and is situated on a rising ground within a quarter of a mile from the village, and about one hundred yards from the spot where the martyr is believed to have been born. He was the son of humble but pious parents, his father being a weaver by trade, and

from his birth was specially dedicated to the service of Christ and His Church. Through the help of friends he attended the University of Edinburgh, where he prosecuted his studies with marked success, and, though prevented by conscientious reasons from taking part in the graduation ceremony, he received his degree in private, and took his place among the graduates of that University. Later still, when acting as tutor to a family in Lanark, he succeeded through the influence of Dr. Mark Clifford, a prominent Royalist, in getting his name added to the burgess roll of that town, thus giving evidence of his desire to stand well in the estimation of his countrymen, and to assert and enjoy his civil rights. And yet, while not despising literary and social distinction, he was most distinguished even then by his piety and purity of heart. For a time his mind was tortured with doubts on the subject of religion, which, however, like many another brave and earnest soul before and since, he fought successfully, and finally conquered.

"He fought his doubts, and gathered strength,
He would not make his judgment blind:
He faced the spectres of the mind,
And laid them: thus he came at length
To find a stronger faith his own:
And Power was with him in the night,
Which makes the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone."

On the 27th July, 1681, at the Cross of Edinburgh, young Renwick witnessed the execution of the Rev. Donald Cargill, and was so moved thereby that he finally resolved to join the band of resolute men who were fighting to the death for their country's and their Church's liberty Six months later he was one of forty who rode into Lanark and affixed to the Cross a plain and forcible Declaration of their reasons for renouncing allegiance to King Charles. He also frequented the meetings of the United Societies,* which had been formed for mutual protection and advice, and whose special mission is referred to by him in the following letter to Sir Robert Hamilton of Preston, who was then in Holland, and with whom to the close of his life he maintained the closest friendship :—

"We do not question but you know already how that by the Lord's providence there is a general correspondence, which for a while bypast has been kept up by the Societies of this land, who profess to own the way of God, and not to say a Confederacy with this untoward generation: for which end there have Commissioners from their respective Societies met together, at least once a quarter, that they might treat and confer anent what is required in this day."

* Their first meeting was held at Logan House, in the parish of Lesmahagow, on 15th December, 1681.

Besides appointing representatives to the Church in Holland, one of whom was Sir Alexander Gordon of Earlston, Hamilton's brother-in-law, the United Societies selected and sent thither young men to complete their studies for the ministry, one of whom was Renwick. Writing from Groningen (Feb. 6th, 1683) the latter lets us see where his heart is fixed, although as yet he has not quite overcome his doubts and fears :—

"I am at present in a confused, anxious, and disconsolate condition : yet I dare not say but the Lord is kind though I be froward : and I think that which my soul would take as the greatest proof of His kindness would be a melting frame of spirit from Himself. But O, in all cases let us have our recourse to that Rock that is higher than we, where we shall find comfort for our perplexed hearts : and let us lay our all under the feet of all men, but quit a hoof of God's matters to no man. Let us be lions in God's cause and lambs in our own."

Two weeks later he writes in a somewhat similar strain :—

"I have, since I saw you last, had as sad conflicts, yea more sad than ever I had heretofore. But O that I could bless and praise the name of the only holy and wise God, there is not one dram in the mixture of my cup that I can want ; yea I see a necessity for all that I meet with. And though I have had very sad conflicts, the Lord (O infinite condescension !) hath made me to possess sweet hours both in the night and day. . . . But I ought not to misbelieve ; He can keep my feet from falling : He can perfect strength in my weakness.

But this is the way that the Lord would have me to take; yea, I think assuredly this is the course He would have me to fall upon, to seek all that I need from Himself by prayer."

That he did not neglect his studies, even when these seemed occasionally to be a hindrance rather than a help to his spiritual life, is certified by Mr. Brakell, the minister of Leewarden, who, in a letter to the United Societies, remarks:—"the three students chosen by you to the pastoral office are busy at their studies." Indeed, so much did he commend himself to his teachers and friends by his diligence and success, and so great was his longing to be engaged in ministerial work that it was resolved to push forward his ordination even earlier than had been intended. Accordingly, after sundry difficulties had been removed, he was ordained by the "Classis" or Presbytery of Groningen on the 10th May, 1683.

A time of waiting and anxiety now intervened, during which he heard of the arrest at Newcastle of his friend, Sir Alexander Gordon of Earlston. To this he refers in the following letter from Rotterdam, of date June 18th, to Sir Robert Hamilton:—

"As for your going further away, I desire, indeed, to believe, that the Lord hath some work to do further abroad; but I think the change of dispensations calls

you to stay still a while with our friends that are with you ; for assuredly they will be much affected with the news of our dear friend Earlston, your dear brother, being taken. And also, I think, you cannot move until you hear what comes of him (the Lord, I think, hath a great kindness for him, and will honour him), and till you receive letters from Scotland, both to yourself, to the Presbytery of Groningen, and other friends.

"I am not a little sorrowful at the very heart, that I am not in Scotland to obey all your commands anent your dear brother. The Lord himself knows, that nothing that ever I was trusted with was such an exercise to me, as my being detained now out of it is. My longings and earnest desire to be in that land, and with that pleasant remnant, are very great. I cannot tell what may be in it, but I hope the Lord hath either some work to work, or else is minded presently to call for a testimony at my hand ; and if He give frame and furniture, I desire to welcome either of them. O ! dear Sir, mind me, become of me what will. I have much ado, many obligations lying upon me ; and the Lord hath laid on not a few of them by your hands, and therefore you are the more engaged to be mindful of me. And, I may say it, your God lets me not be unmindful of you ; and I am of the mind, that sometimes He is very kind unto you, putting mixtures of joy and rejoicing in Himself, into your cup of sorrow.

"When I am writing this line, I received from Scotland a packet of letters addressed to your sister, the Lady Earlston. But, expecting that there were letters for myself therein, I presumed to break up the packet, but did not read her letter. I found three for myself, but none from one that I most expected a line from, viz., M. B., neither hear I any word of news, for they are not dated, but I think it is long since they were

written. However, I hear that all the forces of Scotland, the rendezvous of hell, are afoot, because there is one Alexander Smith, a member of one of our Societies, and a godly youth, who was apprehended, but rescued from the enemy, who were taking him from Edinburgh to Glasgow to be executed, and one of their guard being slain. The Lord be thanked that He is stirring up any to vex the Midianites, and to account their brother's place to be their own. I must also tell you this, that I hear in one of my letters, that the Lord is making the increase of the persecution a mean to blow up the zeal of some to a greater height. O good news! dear Sir, it minds me of Paul's words, Phil. i. 28. 'And in nothing terrified by your adversaries,' &c. It is not long till the cup of the Amorite and the Edomite shall be brimful. *Courage yet for all that is come and gone; the loss of men is not the loss of the cause. What is the matter though we should all fall? I assure all men that the cause shall not fall.*"

CHAPTER II.

Return to Scotland—first public discourse—numerous escapes—letters of intercommuning.

LEAVING Holland in the summer of 1683, Renwick was exposed to many and serious perils before he reached Scotland. For greater security he had taken the name of James Bruce, and in a letter from Dublin, of date August 24th, the

original of which is in our possession, he describes a narrow escape he made at Rye, in the south of England. This letter is signed James Bruce, and was addressed to his friend and patron, Sir Robert Hamilton. In another, written a month later in Edinburgh, he repeats the story of his escape at Rye, and refers also to his subsequent visit to Dublin :—

September 26, 1683. "Being kept some days at the Texel, where I was (in some measure) exercised to know what might be the language thereof, which I could not know till afterwards we launched forth into the sea, where we were tossed for some days with a violent contrary wind, and driven within uptaking of the coast of France, before that we could get the English coast taken up. And all with very great hazard, for the vessel was but little, and not at all firm, which occasioned our setting into a harbour in England called Rye, where we went ashore and were much noticed by the tyrant's waiters, it being upon the back of the discovery of their plot. Yet the Lord so restrained them that we were not challenged. However, we thought it not fit (fearing snares) to stay ashore, and therefore went aboard again. But, after some days, the said waiters in their passing by came aboard of us, and asked very rudely of the skipper, where we were, who replied, that we were aboard; and then, asking what men we were, were answered by the skipper, that he knew not; which I, overhearing, thought that his answer would make the said waiters more inquisitive. However the Lord so restrained them, that when they came unto us, they had no power to challenge us. Now

all this time, we still concluded that we were already apprehended, seeing no probability of shunning it. But, blest be the Lord, it was no way terrifying unto me; for, notwithstanding of His other special assistance, I saw so much of His hand in it (we being driven seven leagues back unto that place) that I could not quarrel, but was much refreshed with that word—It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good. Then, after this, the skipper did what he could to ensnare us on the Sabbath-day, but the Lord so struck him with His own hand, that he was not able to go forth to give any information of us. And on the Monday morning the Lord sent a fair wind, which was embraced, and so brought us safe away, far beyond our expectation. O! all this should learn us to credit Him with His own cause, and with our case, and may let us see that enemies, further than is permitted, may not prevail. Then after this winning forward unto Dublin, from whence there was no way of departing without a pass, but desiring to wait the Lord's time, and to commit our case unto Him, He wonderfully provided an occasion for our friend George. But in no ways they would condescend to take me with them, which was a piece of exercise unto me to know what might be the language of it; yet at the time I could not see it fully, but afterwards was made to see, that the Lord had some piece of work to do there."

This "piece of work" is referred to subsequently in a communication sent to his friends in Dublin by a General Meeting of the Societies. At the close of their letter the following sentences occur:—"We shall trouble you no farther at this time, but heartily and fully approve of the carriage among you of your hearty friend

and well-wisher in the Lord, Mr. James Renwick, who is for us a faithful minister of Jesus Christ. . . . We hold ourselves obliged in duty to satisfy you who have been his hearers; therefore we have sent unto you a true transcript of the certificate of his ordination in Latin, and the English version thereof, with some other papers, for your clearing and information in the Lord's cause, thanking you heartily for the great kindness he reports that ye showed unto him, taking it as if it had been done to all of us."

Though ordained in the month of May, Renwick had not yet formally entered upon his ministry. He waited for the "call" from the people in Scotland which was considered necessary, and could alone justify him in performing his ministerial functions. This was at length given and accepted on October 3rd, at Darmead, in the eastern extremity of the parish of Cambusnethan, on which day a general meeting of the Societies was held, according to appointment. Having first given an account of his ordination, and having also presented a certificate thereof, a formal call to act as their minister was then received and accepted by him, after which what is generally known as his "Testimony" was read to the people, though not with universal approbation. In it a very full and free expression had been given of his views regarding the contro-

versies of the day; and although in substance he adhered to it till the end, on maturer consideration he seems to have regretted his manner of stating some things. On the very day of his death he wrote as follows to Sir Robert Hamilton:—

"Now as to my Testimony which I left in your hands, when I entered into the work of the ministry. I do still adhere unto the matter of it, but I think the manner of expression is in some things too tart, and it containeth sundry men's names, some whereof are now in eternity. It is not so pertinent to our present affairs for the state of our controversies is altered. Therefore I judge it may be destroyed, for I have testimony sufficient left behind me in my written sermons and in my letters. But if this trouble you, and you desire to keep it for yourself and your own use, you should keep this letter with it and not publish it farther abroad. Yet you may make use of any part of the matter of it that may conduce to the clearing of any controversy."

On November 23rd, 1683, another important step was taken. On that day a great multitude assembled from all parts at Darmead to hear the young minister deliver his first public discourse. This had probably been delayed on account of bodily indisposition to which he refers in one of his letters, and which he accepts as part of the needed preparation for his work.

"As for myself, in other things, since I came here, I have been more pained and indisposed of body than for

several years before. However, it was made sweet unto me, for I saw two things in it. First, when before I was casting up and counting all pieces of cost, I thought I saw my all in the Lord's hand, but only bodily strength, thinking that there was enough of that in mine own. And He takes that way with me which, O! is glorious, that I may have strength as well as other furniture from His hand, in more than an ordinary manner, that so His name may get the more praise therefore. Secondly, I saw this in it, that though I have been in some places of the country, yet I have but seen through little of it; and where I have not been I fear more an anxiety after the ordinances than a thirsting after the Lord, so that I think the Lord is seeking to get His people both to prize, and yet to be denied to, the means."

It was no ordinary treat the Lord had prepared for His people that day in the wilderness. After expounding the first eight verses of the 40th chapter of Isaiah, beginning with the words "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people saith the Lord," Renwick chose for his text the very passage from which Cargill had preached his last sermon. Doubtless he wished the people to know that he was now serving himself heir to Cargill and raising aloft the standard which had fallen from the veteran warrior's hand. Moreover, he recognised that the danger was even greater now than ever, as also their need of the Lord's protection and strength. Hence with singular appropriateness he selected for his text these words in Isaiah xxvi. 20—"Come my

people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment until the indignation be overpast." Those who think of Renwick chiefly as a controversialist would be surprised to notice the evangelical freedom and fervour which pervades this sermon from first to last, as when he says—"We must preach this word 'Come' to you as long as you are here, until you be transplanted out of this spiritual warfare into celestial triumph. Oh! Sirs, Come, Come; ask what you will and He will give it. Oh! Come, Come!"

Nor was his work confined to preaching alone, though in this he chiefly delighted. Within a few months he is said to have baptized more than six hundred children, and from the letters and other documents which have been preserved we are justified in saying that his correspondence both public and private must have occupied no inconsiderable portion of his time and thought. With so weak a body, and exposed to severe and long-continued privations and sufferings, it is altogether marvellous how he was able to answer the numerous calls addressed to him from all parts of the land, while in the failure of his enemies to apprehend him or to lay an arrest upon his work, we have a striking proof of the loyalty of his friends and the faithfulness of God. The story of his numerous and hairbreadth escapes is one

that still remains to be written, though from his own letters much may be learned regarding them. Thus we read :—

(July 9, 1684.) "Upon the Sabbath, after your letter came to my hand, we met for public worship, near the Whin-bog in the Monkland; but that country having generally apostatised into an open hostility against the Lord, some went quickly away unto Glasgow, and gave notice unto the enemy's forces. Howbeit, we heard thereof ere forenoon's sermon was ended, yet continued until that part of the work was gone about. Thereafter we thought it fit to depart from that place, and also that the armed men should keep together for our better defence and safety ; which (through God's goodness) was a means to keep the enemy from noticing and pursuing after stragglers, they being stricken unto some quandary and terror, and keeping both their horse and foot in one body. Yet they lodged all that night (we not knowing of it) within a mile of some, and two miles of others of us, intending to set forward toward the houses where we were. But the Lord, whose ways are wonderful, made use of a 'malignant' gentleman to detain them, he asserting that none of us went toward that airt. Notwithstanding, this wakened up the adversaries more ; so that they kept up a pursuit and search, which proved very obstructive to our Convention, which was upon the Thursday thereafter. For, upon that very day, they came with horse and foot to search the moors where we were, and came here upon us ere we could get anything concluded : which thing moved us (we suspecting that they, some way or other, had gotten notice of some of us being together) to remove from that place some way off into a little glen, where we resolved to keep ourselves

obscure. But after we had rested and refreshed ourselves a little, we espied four of their foot marching toward us: whereupon it was thought fit to send out so many to meet them, who, when they came together, fired upon one another. But the Lord's gracious providence so ordered it, that there was not the least scathe upon our side, there being one of the enemy so wounded that he died since. Howbeit the shots alarmed the rest of our enemies who were upon the hill, and when we drew out to the open fields, we saw their foot not very far from us, and got present advertisement that the enemy was still upon the pursuit and near unto us. We, in all haste, set forward through the moss, having no outward strength to fly unto, but by crossing the way of the adversary: whereupon we expected an encounter with them. Yet, committing ourselves into the Lord's hand, we went on, until we came unto another certain moss, where we stayed until night, and got much of our business done. But in all this, the wonderful power of God was seen, in both inspiriting His people for that exigency, and in preserving us from falling into the hands of the adversaries. Yea, though He shewed us wonders therein, yet He delighted to shew us more. For, upon the Saturday night thereafter, there was a competent number of us met in a barn for worship, and had not well begun until we heard both the drums and trumpets of the enemy; but we thought it most expedient to set watches without, and continue at our work until we saw further. Nevertheless, in all these tumults and dangers, the Lord's goodness was so manifested to His people, that He not only hid them under His wings, and preserved them, but He also kept their spirits from the least fear, confusion, or commotion; yea, the very sight of some of them would have made resolute soldiers

amongst us. So after this hazard was over, some of us thought it convenient to stay where we were (it being a woody place) until the Sabbath day was past. But, ere the middle of the day, we got an alarm that the enemy was within two miles or thereabout, coming toward that airt; whereupon we went over the Clyde. But so soon as that was, we, being in number about six or seven, had almost encountered a party of the enemy's horse, who, at the crossing of our way, had inevitably met with us, if the Lord had not so ordered it, that a friend of ours had seen them ere they could see us; who thereupon came running toward us with a white napkin (because conspicuous to us) flourishing in his hand: whereupon we halted, and when he came to us, we lurked among some bushes until the enemy passed by. Thereafter we setting forward two by two upon our journey, which was intended to be but short, some two of us met with one of the adversary's number upon horseback, who presently fled with all his might toward Lanark, we being within three short miles thereof; which forced us to take a desperate course, in running through that plenished country unto Darmead Moss, still expecting to foregather with that hostile town of Lanark, both horse and foot. But the Lord's power and goodness was such toward us, that we escaped all their hands; which thing was great matter of admiration unto us all, and made me to wonder not a little; that scripture, Psal. cxxvi. 2, 3, being my companion, 'Then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them. The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad."

A month later (August 12th, 1684) he writes again to Sir Robert Hamilton:—

"Upon the penult * day of July, when I was going, in company with other three, to the General Meeting, we espied two dragoons meeting us, and not expecting any more to be following, we went forward not dreading them. But when we came within word and shot, we saw a party of about twenty more very near upon us: whereupon, seeing there was no probability of resisting them, we turned up to a hill called Dungavel. But my three neighbours being upon foot and I upon horseback, they compassed about by the foot of the hill, but I took up to the height, being hotly pursued by many of that party; some whereof were at my right hand to keep me from the mosses, and others behind, who always as they came within shot, discharged upon me. So, being near unto the top of the hill, and finding myself beset round about, and seeing no visible door of escape, I thought fit to quit the horse which I had, and wait till I saw what God did in it. But after I had lighted from the horse, I saw before me a piece of good equitable † ground, whereupon I essayed to mount again upon the horse, but the beast would not stand unto me; whereupon I resolved to kill the horse, lest the enemy should be thereby strengthened. Howbeit, having but one shot, I thought fit to keep it for a greater extremity, and finding the beast such as would not stand still, I reached it with a shabble ‡ which I had, conjecturing that possibly (the place being uninhabited) the beast might save my wallet and the papers, together with Mr. Boyd's wallet. Thus I went up to the very top of the hill upon foot, and seeing myself so encompassed that I could not run from them, and that I was in no ways able to fight with them, I judged it my best to clap upon the ground. So I went

* The last but one. † Level. ‡ A short sword.

into a cairn, which by situation was about six or seven paces of ground out of all their eyes, thinking to lie down upon it, all the hill being green and bare in that place, knowing that God would carry their sight over it. So coming to the top of it, I espied in it a pit, which, when I saw it, it entered into my mind that it was ordained of God for hiding me. Thus I lay down into it, winning by God's goodness, to a cheerful submission to death, torture, or whatsoever His will might be. But I was, in no small measure, confident that no evil at that time could happen unto me, the Lord giving me that Scripture, Psalm vi. 8. 'Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity,' which was so powerful that I was made (I think) 100 times to repeat it over, ere I got myself stayed, together with that other Psalm (xci. 11), 'For He shall give His angels charge over thee,' which was such unto me, that I lifted up my head to see these angels; but, considering my folly in that particular, I was made to laugh at mine own witlessness. So I lay still until the sun set, sometimes praying and sometimes praising God, though, Oh! I can do neither to purpose. But all the joy that the Lord's works of wonder for me did afford was swallowed up in sorrow, because of what befel my dear brethren, who (all that were with me) fell into the enemy's hands, one of them receiving eleven wounds. Then, after all, when I thought upon drawing off the hill, not knowing the way to one friend's house in the whole country, I besought the Lord, that as He had hid me, so He would lead and guide me. Thus I set my face toward Clyde, and after I had travelled about four miles, I met with Windhill, with whom I stayed two days, and kept a meeting upon the second night, even while the militia were searching that side of the country; and twice that night I very wonderfully escaped, as it had been even out of their very paws."

On August 30th, 1684, he was formally cited to appear before the Privy Council, and in the following month "letters of intercommuning" were issued against him, in which he is described as a pretended preacher and a seditious vagabond, and all loyal and subjects were prohibited, under the severest penalties from holding any intercourse with him or his friends :—

"We command and charge all and sundry our lieges and subjects," so runs this legal document, "that they nor none of them presume, nor take upon hand to reset, supply, or intercommune with the said Mr. James Renwick, rebel aforesaid; nor furnish him with meat, drink, house, harbour, victual, nor no other thing useful or comfortable to him; or to have intelligence with him by word, writ, or message, or any other manner of way whatsoever, under the pain of being esteemed art and part with him in the crimes foresaid, and pursued therefor with all rigour to the terror of others. And we hereby require all our sheriffs and other officers to apprehend and commit to prison the person of the said Mr. James Renwick wherever they can find or apprehend him."

This atrocious proclamation was speedily answered by the United Societies, who, at a general meeting on October 15, resolved "to warn intelligencers and bloody Doegs of the wickedness of their ways, and to threaten them (in case of persisting in malicious shedding of their blood, or instigating thereto and assisting

therein), that they would not be so slack-handed in coming to revenge it." They therefore instructed Mr. Renwick to draw up a declaration for this purpose, which was afterwards affixed to several market crosses and church doors, and was known as "the Apologetical Declaration and Admonitory Vindication of the true Presbyterians of the Church of Scotland, especially anent intelligencers and informers."

In this public document, which created a deep impression, and was followed by important results, the Covenanters testified their adherence to previous declarations wherein they had disowned the authority of Charles Stuart, and declared war against him and his accomplices. While expressing abhorrence of the spirit and practice of revenge, they declared to all, "that whosoever stretched forth their hands against them by shedding their blood, either by authoritative commanding as the justiciary, or actual doing as the military, or searching out and delivering them up to their enemies as the gentry, or informing against them wickedly and willingly as the viperous and malicious bishops and curates, or raising the hue and cry as the common intelligencers—they should repute them enemies to God and the covenanted work of Reformation, and punish them according to their power and the degree of their offence!" This

Declaration, for a time, struck terror to the hearts of many of their enemies, though afterwards it was used as an instrument of torture by the persecutors, who framed a special Oath of Abjuration regarding it, which they pressed unmercifully on all suspected persons. Indeed, so great was the suffering occasioned by it, that Renwick was often heard to say that, however pure and peaceable had been his motives in connection with it, he wished from his heart that Declaration had not been published.

CHAPTER III.

Increased suffering—Monmouth and Argyll—cruelty of Claverhouse—second Sanquhar Declaration—Revocation of Edict of Nantes.

On the death of Charles II. in February, 1685, and the accession of his brother James, an avowed Papist, to the throne, the sufferings of Renwick and his friends were much intensified. In evidence of this, we may point to the nature of his correspondence,* which now assumes a

* *e.g.*, Letter xxxv. in *The Life and Letters of James Renwick*, by Rev. W. H. Carslaw, M.A.

peculiar character, suggestive of danger and trouble. Some of his letters at this time are unsigned, while in more than one he resumes his old pseudonym of *James Bruce.* Indeed, as the author of "Faithful Contendings Displayed" * informs us, the persecution against the Societies reached now its greatest severity. Many were cruelly and inhumanly murdered in the fields, others were hanged, many thrown into prison and tortured with fiendish cruelty. Much diligence was also shown in searching for fugitives, who were reduced to the utmost straits and forced to seek shelter in the wildest and loneliest places. In a word, as this old chronicler expresses it, such was the enraged cruelty and furious zeal of these bloody adversaries, that they spared neither the young man for his youth, nor the old man for his grey hair and stooping age—yea, women, and these both old and young, escaped not their bloody and barbarous hands.

For several years, ever since his defeat at Drumclog, John Graham of Claverhouse had been hunting the Covenanters with ever-increasing fury, in this respect resembling Saul of Tarsus when "he made havock of the Church, entering

* Published by John Howie of Lochgoin, in 1780, and containing the Minutes of the United Societies kept by Michael Shields from 1681 to 1689.

into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison." Mark Napier, with a zeal worthy of a better cause, has tried to picture Claverhouse as a noble-minded gentleman, wholly consumed with a love of duty and practically guiltless of the tragic cruelties charged against him. But that he felt no more sympathy for the men he was persecuting than the hunter for his game may be inferred from the following words addressed to General Dalzell, on the 15th June, 1684, five days after his marriage:—"I parted on Friday (13th) at twelve o'clock from Paisley, went by Kilmarnock and Mauchline, but could hear nothing of these rebels. . . We have left no den, no knowe, no moss, no hill unsearched. There is a great drought, so that we could go almost through all." It was on such an expedition he was bent, on May 1st, 1685, when he came suddenly on John Brown of Priesthill while cutting turf on the hill. Bringing him down to his own door and putting to him the usual ensnaring questions, he ordered him to say his prayers and prepare for immediate death. The martyr knelt and prayed in such a strain that even the troopers were impressed, and having kissed his weeping wife and children earnestly sought on their behalf that "all promised and purchased blessings might be multiplied upon them." Claverhouse, having

ordered six of his men to fire and seeing them hesitate, drew his own pistol and fired it at the good man's head, turning immediately to the newly-made widow and brutally asking, "What thinkest thou of thy husband now?" "I ever thought much good of him," was her noble answer, "but more now than ever." "It were but justice to lay thee beside him," exclaimed the murderer. "If you were permitted," she bravely replied, "I doubt not but your cruelty would go that length; but how will you answer for this morning's work?" "To man I can be answerable," said this cruel tyrant, "and as for God, I will take Him in my own hands." Such was the man to whose tender mercies the lives and liberties of so many of our fellow-countrymen were at this time committed, and who, notwithstanding his personal beauty and soldierly qualities, is still in many parts of our land known as "the bloody Clavers." Renwick had known "the Christian Carrier," as John Brown of Priesthill was commonly called, and on more than one occasion had found shelter in his cottage. We can therefore easily picture the grief with which he heard of his death, grief mingled however with holy joy and thankfulness.

Similar tragedies to that of Priesthill were however occurring in other parts of the land. At Wigtown two helpless women were done to death by drowning in peculiarly affecting circum-

stances, while three men who were returning from Galloway, whither they had gone to hear Renwick preach, were overtaken by a band of soldiers at Crossgellioch, near Cumnock, and shot in cold blood. These instances, chosen from among many more of a similar kind, may suffice to explain why these times are still named with a shudder, "The Killing Times of Scotland."

Great as was the danger to which Renwick was exposed, his courage never failed, because his faith never wavered. On the 28th of May, 1685, with about two hundred men, he rode into the town of Sanquhar, and there, after praise and prayer, he read and affixed to the Market Cross a Declaration similar to that of Richard Cameron about five years before. This second Declaration would probably have occasioned more trouble even than the first had not the attention of the Government been occupied with two other serious attacks upon their authority, the one in England under the Duke of Monmouth and the other in Scotland under the Earl of Argyll.

Monmouth, who was a natural son of Charles II. by Lucy Walters, was the head of the popular party in England and rival of the Duke of York. At the time of the Titus Oates' plot (1678), rumours that the "Protestant Duke," as he was called, was indeed the King's legitimate son, spread far and wide, while his clemency to the

Covenanters after the battle of Bothwell Bridge increased his popularity with the English Non-conformists, though it brought upon him the violent censures of Charles and Lauderdale. His subsequent exile in Holland brought him into closer relations with those of both nations who were opposed to the Duke of York's succession, and on the death of Charles he issued a manifesto declaring James to be a murderer and usurper, charging him with introducing popery and arbitrary power, and asserting his own legitimate right to the Crown. His descent upon the West of England, followed by his disastrous defeat at Sedgemoor, and execution, and the horrible atrocities inflicted on his followers by Judge Jeffreys of unhappy memory, is familiar to all readers of English history, and has been graphically described by a recent writer in *Micah Clarke.*

A similar attempt to oppose the succession of James, Duke of York, was made in Scotland by Archibald, ninth Earl of Argyll, whose followers were speedily dispersed while he himself was taken and executed. Though, for reasons which appeared cogent to himself and his immediate followers, Renwick refused to join Argyll's expedition, this fact did not prevent him from sharing in some of its unhappy consequences. According to one who lived at that

time, and was himself a sufferer for Christ, "all the forces—foot, horse, dragoons, militia troops, and companies of Lowlanders, were poured in upon all the western and southern shires, to range through all the rocks, woods, muirs, and mountains, pursuing the chase with indefatigable travel, and saying, They had now gotten away with Monmouth and Argyll, they must now fall on with Renwick and the old regiment." No wonder that in one of his letters at the time he remarks, "I am not a little troubled that our converse by letters should not be more frequent; but continual hurrying and tossing stops it on my part, together with such a multitude of business that sometimes I would put a greater price upon an hour of time than upon much riches. O, Sir! who knew my work, if they had not hearts harder than adamant, they would be affected with commiseration; but why should I say thus, for who knew the Lord's kindness to worm unworthy me, would make me the object of their envy." In the same letter he mentions that the Lord is still increasing His people in numbers and spiritual strength, and many a sacrifice He is taking off their hands, adding these beautiful touching words, "there are not many days wherein His truths are not sealed with blood, and that in all places, so that I think within a little there shall not be a moss or moun-

tain in the West of Scotland which shall not be *flowered with martyrs.*"

Referring to fresh measures by the Government, and to renewed activity on the part of the military, he continues :—"Enemies have brought down the Highlanders upon us, and they with the forces do run through the country (Lord give direction and strength!), and kill all whom they meet with, if they do not say whatsoever they bid them. We are fearing massacres: here is a massacre indeed. Oh that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears that I might weep without intermission for the slain of the daughter of my people. Also, they have given out by Act of Parliament and open proclamation that all ministers and hearers, who are found in the fields, are to be killed presently; and found in houses the minister is to be killed and the people fined. The devil now is come down in great wrath, because he knoweth his time to be but short. . . . I have of late made a hasty journey into England, the length of Newcastle, and (blessed be the Lord!) with much more than expected encouragement and success. But as to your desire in your letter I cannot at this instant answer it; but I shall keep your memorandum till I get it done; for I have been these eight days so hurried and chased with continual alarms, that I could not get settled to write any,

and the Lord to manifest His power gave me a most remarkable delivery."

Towards the end of this eventful and troubled year a public crime was committed in France, which threw the whole Protestant world into the utmost alarm, while it involved multitudes of Frenchmen in cruel sufferings and oppression. For nearly a century, by the famous decree of Henry IV., known as the Edict of Nantes, a large amount of freedom had been enjoyed by his Protestant subjects in the exercise of their religion. Now on the 18th October, 1685, after a series of detestable *Dragonnades*, Louis XIV. signed the revocation of this decree, and by this cruel and despotic act drove from their country multitudes of the most industrious and intelligent of his subjects, who sought and found refuge in Great Britain and other Protestant lands. Those who remained were exposed to inexpressible sufferings and indignities. Boys and girls were torn from their parents, and sent to be educated in Convents. All Calvinistic ministers were commanded either to abjure their religion or to quit France within a fortnight. "It was clear," says Lord Macaulay, "that the spirit of Gardiner and of Alva was still the spirit of the Roman Catholic Church. Louis was not inferior to James in generosity and humanity, and was certainly far superior to James in all the abilities

and acquirements of a statesman. Louis had, like James, repeatedly promised to respect the privileges of his Protestant subjects. Yet Louis was now avowedly a persecutor of the reformed religion. What reason was there, then, to doubt that James waited only for an opportunity to follow the example? He was already forming in defiance of the law a military force officered to a great extent by Roman Catholics. Was there anything unreasonable in the apprehension that this force might be employed to do what the French dragoons had done?"

We have searched Renwick's letters in vain for any direct allusion to this event, but the following sentences addressed to Mrs. Jean Hamilton in Leewarden reveal sufficiently his anticipation of approaching trouble.

"Nov. 18, 1685.—I think we are not yet entered our Jordan: for though we have come through a miry and thorny wilderness, yet our Jordan is before us, and it will be very deep but it will not be very broad. When the ark of God enters it, it shall be like to drown, but it shall suddenly and admirably win to the other side."

CHAPTER IV.

A moment's respite—visit to England—conventicle in Berwickshire—Rev. Alexander Shields.

THE year 1686 was chiefly remarkable for repeated attempts, on the part of the King, to obtain relief for his Roman Catholic subjects from their civil and religious disabilities. One attendant result was a larger amount of liberty for Renwick and his friends, who were not slow to take advantage of it, as is shown by the following extracts from his letters :—

"May 3, 1686.—I had written to your Honour far sooner, but my work keepeth me busy; so much of it lies in the remote corners of the land, as Galloway, Nithsdale, Annandale, etc. I have not been near Edinburgh since the 16th of October, 1685, and I have travelled since through Clydesdale, Eskdale, some of the Forest, Annandale, some of Galloway, Kyle, and Cunningham. And in all these places I examined the Societies as I passed through, several other persons coming to hear, and I found my work greater this last journey than ever before. Also in lower Cunningham, where there had never been any field-preachers, I got kindly acceptance, and I have had several calls since from that countryside. Such like have I found through Renfrew. Moreover, the Lord hath wrought a great change upon the barony of Sanquhar, the parish of Kirkconnel, and these dark corners. Generally they come to hear the Gospel, and are quitting many of the defe tions

of the time. Yes, I may say (to the Lord's praise) that our meetings were never so numerous, and the work did never thrive more than since man opposed it so much."

"Aug. 13, 1686.—Our condition is in some measure changed in this respect, that the enemies for this year have not been so hotly pursuing after us as they were. Whatever it may flow from upon the enemies' part, whether from the Popish party being so busied in their contrivances, and other grand persecutors discourted, or from some other thing, yet we can see the Lord's restraining hand in it, and that 'He stays His rough wind in the day of His east wind,'"

Nor was this evangelising work confined to the southern and western counties of Scotland, or even to Scotland itself. Ten months after Cargill's death, Renwick had seen another martyr die by the hands of the public executioner, and had been strongly moved by the sight. He was an Englishman, from Northumberland, Robert Gray by name, who after a prolonged detention in the Canongate Tolbooth, was executed on May 19th, 1682. Renwick was present at the execution, and had a strong impression, as he afterwards told his mother, that "he himself would be the next that he should see executed." Perhaps the recollection of this scene now awakened a deeper interest in Robert Gray's countrymen, or, as is more likely, he found it expedient to cross the Border at this time to escape an active search which was being made for him, to which we shall

have occasion yet to refer. In any case, we find him busy at his much-loved work of preaching, learning also from those with whom he came into contact how difficult it is for good people always to see eye to eye on more or less important matters.

"Aug. 13, 1686.—I have been for a season in England, where by the good hand of the Lord we kept our Sabbath meetings, all except one day, in the fields without any disturbance, but upon other days of the week they were kept in the night-time. In that land I got some discoveries of the Sectaries; for at one preaching, where there were many Anabaptists hearing, because I asserted the divine right of infant baptism from Scripture, clearing the same from the testimony of some ancient authors, they who before had seemed to have much love and affection would not afterwards carry themselves civil, and told us that they had always been willing to do, and had done for Scottish sufferers, and that other Scottish ministers had not fallen upon such heads. Such an upcast was a little troublesome unto me; but by it I perceived, as also I expressed, that their hospitality to Scottish ministers and sufferers had both done the ministers and themselves ill; for it stopped the ministers' mouths from declaring the counsel of God, and made themselves lay weight upon such deeds, and look upon Scottish ministers as so much obliged to them that they behoved to tolerate them. But this I say, that they that deal freely with them will not long get their countenance. Howbeit, at my coming away one of them told me that they were resolved to collect for me, but were informed that I would not accept thereof. Whereupon

I told him that they were my friends that informed so rightly, for I went not thither for necessity, neither to seek theirs but them. Also, at the desire of friends in Scotland, some of us went to converse with a Presbyterian minister, whom we heard to be well affected toward this party, and found him, as we thought, a very humble tender man, much exercised with that Church's case. After information he did agree with us in the word of our Testimony; only he was not so straight as to some matters of England as we would desire. But this is not to be thought strange, considering that he hath none either to go before him nor with him in these things."

The search already alluded to, as the possible occasion of his present visit to England, followed immediately on the discovery of his presence at an important field meeting in Berwickshire during the month of July. The place chosen for this conventicle was a retired glen called the Greencleugh, near Braidshaw Rig in Lammermoor. Withiu half a mile lay Elliot's Well, a mineral spring then much resorted to, which made the place peculiarly suitable for religious gatherings, as those who came there to worship had always a plausible reason to offer if met and challenged by the military. There is, indeed, according to a recent reliable authority,* a tradition of a family

* Rev. D. Wood Brown, M.A., Author of the *Covenanters of the Merse.*

called Aitchison, in the parish of Duns, who took their child to receive baptism at one of these meetings disguised in the form of a *greybeard!* Even within the memory of persons yet living, the shepherds of Lammermoor carried supplies of this mineral water to sick people at a distance, and visited the spring with bottles for this purpose.

On the present occasion, from an early hour on the Sabbath morning, little companies of people from all the surrounding districts were gathering by twos and threes on the Gairmuir and dropping in to the Greencleugh by Elliot's well. For the interesting description which follows we are indebted to Mr. Brown's graphic and facile pen. "Some carried arms with them, for the times were desperate, and the business they were on might be a dangerous one. Twelve, indeed, were mounted in the fashion of a guard, being furnished with swords, pistols, or carbines. In the way customary on these occasions, watchmen were now posted on the neighbouring hills, while the rest of the assembly to the number of about a hundred or a hundred and twenty gathered safely in the shelter of the valley beneath. It was about nine o'clock when these preparations were fully made, and the minister whom they expected being not yet come, the young man

"William"* took his place and commenced the service with prayer, after which he read the Scripture and sang a Psalm, acting as what used to be called the Reader of the Kirk, according to the ancient and now obsolete form of Scottish worship, in which a preliminary service of this kind was always conducted by the schoolmaster or some suitable person before the minister began the chief work of the day.

As the strains of the Psalm were dying away among the hills the great preacher, James Renwick himself, appeared on the scene, having ridden by East Lothian and the Redstane Rig to keep his engagement with the congregation he had summoned to meet him at the Greencleuch. His form was slight and his appearance so youthful as to surprise those who saw him for the first time, and indeed he was yet no more than twenty-four years of age, though multiplied trials and responsibilities had given him a ripe experience far beyond his time of life, and the shadow of his approaching death, not unforeseen, made him grave and anxious as one who knew that his time was short and what had to be done must be done quickly.

* An intimate friend of Renwick, who had helped to arrange for the meeting, but whose full name was sought for in vain at the subsequent judicial enquiry.

Though he had just come off a long journey, Renwick at once threw himself into the service of the day with all his accustomed vigour, lecturing, praying, and preaching with little intermission from the moment of his arrival, which was about half-past ten o'clock, till the afternoon. Two shepherds belonging to Byrecleuch and Gala Water were brought in prisoners, probably by the vigilance of the scouts, who had observed them spying on the meeting, and in case they should spread intelligence of what was going on, they were detained until the service was over. From the depositions they afterwards made before the authorities, we learn that the names of two persons were proclaimed at the conventicle in order to marriage with each other—James Creswart or Keder in Carnwath, and Mary Dainty in West Calder—and that the minister took his text that day from these words in the fourth verse of the first chapter of Canticles—"Draw me, we will run after Thee. The King hath brought me into His chambers. We will be glad and rejoice in Thee: we will remember Thy love more than wine: the upright love Thee." No record of this discourse appears among Renwick's published sermons, yet it is not difficult to conjecture the use he would make of such a text. His party had disowned and excommunicated James VII., but this they had done in the Name of Jesus,

the King of kings. Their assemblies in the wilderness, such as that where Renwick now officiated were gathered to do honour to their Anointed King and only Sovereign, Who was the Lord himself. Hence probably the preacher's choice of his text that day, and the solitudes where the conventicle assembled must themselves have suggested a vivid interpretation of those secret chambers of the soul where the beloved of the Lord dwell safely by Him, and find His fellowship cheaply bought at the price of contempt and persecution from all the world beside. The closing words of the text no doubt required a very practical exhortation to the maintenance of that uprightness, that freedom from right hand excesses and left hand defects as it was phrased in the quaint diction of the day, which was indeed the great article of fidelity to Him Whom these Covenanters acknowledged as their Captain and King. With some such solemn advice must the discourse have found its due conclusion, and amid the falling shadows of evening the little gathering dispersed, while Renwick himself, still wearing the short sword which he had never laid aside even while he preached, mounted his horse and returned on his former track by Byrecleuch and Danskine to the Lothians."

Towards the close of this year, another conventicle at which Renwick presided was held in

Galloway not far from Earlston, and a few weeks later he was present at the general meeting of the Societies, when Alexander Shields, the author subsequently of the "Hind let loose" and other volumes, was solemnly set apart to the ministry. This man, who survived the Revolution and had a most interesting history, was the son of James Shields or Shiel, a tenant farmer or bonnet-laird in Berwickshire. He studied both in Edinburgh and at one of the Dutch universities, and, having received license from some of the Nonconformist ministers in London, he was apprehended there while preaching and thrown into prison. Afterwards he was transferred as a prisoner to Scotland, and finally, notwithstanding his acceptance of the Oath of Abjuration, sent to the Bass, from which, however, he contrived to escape in disguise. His sufferings seem to have had the not unnatural effect of intensifying his hatred against the Government, and drawing closer the bonds between him and the Society men. After being received by them at their General Meeting on the 22nd December, 1686, and after examination solemnly set apart to the work of the ministry, he became the intimate friend and fellow-labourer of Renwick, and during the early months of the following year assisted him in preparing for the Press the important volume of which we shall speak in a subsequent chapter. After the Revolu-

tion he became one of the ministers of St. Andrews, where he remained, until in 1699 he joined the ill-fated Darien Expedition, to which also his brother Michael, who had been Clerk of the United Societies, also belonged. Amid the hardships and misfortunes of that unhappy enterprise, Alexander Shields had the opportunity of acting as a missionary among the Indian tribes, and when the position of the New Caledonian Colony became no longer tenable, he retired to Port Royal in the island of Jamaica, where he died of malignant fever on 14th June, 1701.

These facts should lend additional interest to the following statements of Renwick regarding him, in a letter to Sir Robert Hamilton, of date January 11th, 1687:—

"As for our carriage towards the foresaid Mr. Alexander Shields, he, having by the providence of God made his escape out of prison, after a little space of time (without seeking after any party of ministers against whom we have exceptions) came to the country, unto this contending and suffering party. At length, upon the 5th of December, 1686, he came to a meeting which we had in Galloway, in the wood of Earlston, for preaching. Going alongst with me from thence, upon the day following, I told him, albeit I had some satisfaction concerning him from what I had seen under his own hand, and albeit I expected more by further converse with him, yet I thought it most rational in itself, most conducive to the preservation of union amongst us, and also according to the conclusion of our General Meeting, that nothing which concerns the whole should be done

without acquainting them therewith. I said, moreover, that he should not be employed in the public work until he came to the General Correspondence, that all might be satisfied anent him ; which he did very well, and desired us to take that method with him which we would do with any backslidden minister, if God should touch his heart and bring him out from his defections unto the public work. Howbeit, we thought fit to employ him sometimes to go about family exercise, not seeing any reason why this should be forborne, for thereby we might attain to more clearness anent him. And, indeed, in a certain family, where some neighbours (as in ordinary) were gathered unto the worship, I was greatly refreshed with what he spake from Rom. xii. 12, especially with what he had in prayer, with a heavy lamentation to this purpose : 'I cannot longer contain, but I must confess unto the Lord before this people, I am ashamed to offer my body a living sacrifice to Thee, yet I must do it ; for I, a prisoner and a preacher, might have been a martyr, and in glory with Thee and Thy glorified martyrs above, but I sinfully and shamefully saved my life with disowning Thy friends and owning Thy enemies, and it will be a wonder if ever Thou put such an honourable opportunity in my hand again." Very seldom did he go about exercise, but, either in prayer, or in speaking from the scripture, he brake forth into heavy lamentations, confessing particularly his defections. So, at the time of our General Meeting coming, which was December 22, as said is, the foresaid Mr. Alexander came to the same, and we did read over in his hearing (he being present with Mr. David)* the introduction to our Vindi-

* Rev. David Houston from Ireland. After Renwick's death he was apprehended, but rescued by force from the hands of the soldiers, some of whom were killed. See Wodrow's *Hist.*, IV., p. 442.

cation, wherein are comprehended some special steps of our church's defection, and a brief declaration of our present testimony, both as to what we own and disown, together with the fifth head of the same vindication, containing among other things ten grounds, every one of which we judge sufficient for withdrawing from ministers of this covenanted and reformed church to whom they are applicable, in this broken and declining state. Then we asked Mr. Alexander's judgment concerning what he had heard, and whether or not he was of one mind with us as to every part of our present testimony. To which he replied, that he agreed cordially with us in all that he had heard, and particularly on the foresaid ten grounds, judging every one of them to bear a solidity and sufficiency in point of withdrawing. But, said he, there are some things there testified against, whereof I am guilty, and I will take a little time to unbosom myself unto you anent the same. So he began his confession with some pre-occupying cautions, desiring that none might think he was moved to what he now was about to do, from the affection of applause from any man, or, that he might be in with a party (for he knew he would not want alluring employment if he had freedom to embrace it) but only that he might give God the glory, vindicate the cause, exonerate his own conscience, and satisfy offended brethren. Intimating, also, that he looked not upon the Societies as competent for handling ecclesiastic matters, and that he knew they did not assume the same unto themselves, though they were falsely branded therewith, yet he held himself bound in duty, to declare with sorrow before them, wherein he had denied any part of the testimony which they did own. Then he proceeded to the particulars of his confession, and acknowledged,—

"1. That he had involved himself in the guilt of owning the (so-called) authority of James VII. showing the exceeding sinfulness of it, and taking shame unto himself.

"2. He acknowledged himself guilty of taking the oath of Abjuration, and of relapsing into the same iniquity, the sinfulness whereof he held out at great length, making it appear, that by that oath many orthodox principles, which concern us greatly to contend for, are abjured. He declared the occasion of his being inveigled in these transgressions was the entering into an accommodation with the enemy; for he could propose nothing unto them but they still added and yielded to it, until they got him a silly fish catched in their angle. Howbeit, hereby (as he said) he did not extenuate or excuse his sin, for albeit he had as much to say for himself as any man could have, who had declared in such a measure, yet he would neither stifle his own conscience, nor blind the eyes of others, wherefore he showed both the sin and danger of entering upon any accommodation whatsoever with the enemy.

"Now he spoke largely to all these particulars, discovering such heinous and manifold sin therein, that, I think, none could have done it, unless they had known the terrors of the Lord. He showed also the aggravation thereof, desiring everyone to look upon his sin with the aggravating circumstances that he can see in it. And he expressed so much sense and ingenuousness, that none, I think, could require more of him; and I know not who would not have been satisfied as to the foresaids, who had heard him express himself so fully, so plainly, so freely, and with so much sense, grief, and self-condemning. I thought it both singular and promising to see a clergyman come forth with such a confession of his

own defections, when so few of that set are seen in our age to be honoured with the like.

"So Mr. Alexander being desired to remove, we communed together about what we heard, and all declared they found themselves satisfied as to the foresaids. After this, it was consulted amongst us what was necessary to desire for our further satisfaction anent him, and we judged it expedient to enquire how and by whom he was licensed to preach. Whereupon, I having conferred with him before thereanent gave a brief account thereof, and signified that, a considerable while ago, I saw it under his own hand, that if the business of his licence were to be done yet, he would neither take it from such persons, neither would they give it him, and that of late he said unto myself that he knew not one of those who had granted it that now he could concur with. However, we thought it convenient to call himself, that he might give an account thereof before us all, which he did, showing that he went to London with an intention to be an amanuensis to Dr. Owen, or some of their great doctors who were writing books for the press, and that he had a letter of recommendation to one Mr. Blackie, a Scottish minister, who trysted him to speak with him a certain season, and had several ministers convened, unknown to Mr. Alexander, who did press and enjoin him to take licence. So, being carried into it in that sudden and surprising way, he accepted it from the hands of Scottish ministers then in London, but without any impositions or sinful restrictions. However, a little after, the oath of allegiance becoming the trial of that place, the foresaid Mr. Alexander studied, as he had occasion in preaching, plainly and satisfyingly to discover the sin of it, which was so ill taken by the ministers by whom he was licensed, that they threatened and sought to stop his mouth, but he refused to submit unto them.

"Now to this very purpose was the relation that Mr. Alexander himself gave. So, considering what is before related, the Societies for themselves, and I, with the concurrence of some elders then present, did call him to officiate in preaching the word to the suffering remnant of this church. Wherefore, upon the Sabbath following, he and I did preach together, he having his text 2 Cor. v. 11, in these words, in the former part of the verse, viz. :—"Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men"; in which preaching, I may say, he particularly asserted every part of our present testimony, both as to non-compliance with enemies, non-concurrence with defective parties, and disowning the pretended authority of James VII., and also doctrinally confessed his own particular defections, and cried out, that 'knowing the terror of the Lord' in these things he 'persuaded men.' Having appointed a fast upon the Thursday following, I briefly drew up about the number of forty-one causes of humiliation, omitting no piece of defection of old or of late, that I knew or could remember, which causes he cordially agreed with, and expressed the same publicly in his preaching before the congregation, declaring every one of them to be a great cause of humiliation. He confessed again his own defections, holding forth the sin thereof to be very heinous, with much sorrow and regret. So I find Mr. Alexander to be one with us in our present testimony. I look upon him as having the zeal of God in his spirit, and the poor remnant have much of his heart; and, I think, the Lord is with him, and that he cannot be challenged as deficient in the application of his doctrine. For mine own part, I have been refreshed with hearing him, and have been animated to zeal by his preaching and discourse."

The Fast referred to in the previous letter, when forty-one causes of humiliation were enumerated by Renwick and publicly assented to by Shields, was observed on Thursday, the 28th December, at Cairntable, on the border of two parishes, Muirkirk and Douglas. This is a conspicuous hill between Ayrshire and Lanarkshire, and was the scene of many a Covenanting gathering. Here on many occasions Scotia's persecuted children

> "Heard the word of God
> By Cameron thundered, or by Renwick poured
> In gentle stream."

From the circumstances already mentioned, we may well conclude that the present occasion was a peculiarly solemn one, and when, "after singing a part of the seventy eighth psalm," the large congregation settled down to listen to the silvery notes of their favourite preacher, and to the heartbroken utterances of his once erring but penitent brother, there was doubtless much joy in the presence of the angels of God. If we are right in supposing that it was on this occasion that Renwick preached from the words of Amos (ix. 9)—"For lo I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth," we can have no difficulty in

applying the following passage to the special circumstances of the day :—

"The Lord sifts his people by the sieve of temptations, and this is a narrow sieve. It is narrower than the sieve of persecution, but think it not strange that the Lord should take this sieve, for He Himself went through it. No doubt this is a narrow sieve, because this sieve of temptation is fourfold. As

1. When the temptation is suited to the inclination, and that will try the man or woman to purpose.

2. There is another sort of temptation which Satan ordinarily assaults by, and that is when the temptation suits the man's necessity. This Satan did to our blessed Lord when He was an hungered, and when the Tempter bade Him command the stones to be made bread.

3. When Satan suits the temptation to the creature's advantage and says to the man, Do this and the other thing, and you will get the gear kept in this evil time. And

4. When the temptation is grounded upon the Word of God. . . . O ! but the devil hath been busy to sift with this sieve, and he hath prevailed with many, so that whatever they appeared once to be, they are now found to be but chaff. . . . O study to be parted from the chaff, and take all trials well out of the Lord's hand, seeing that His purposes are so gracious therein."

Several weeks before these words were spoken, a reward of £100 sterling had been offered by the Government to any one who should bring Renwick in dead or alive. But so much was he held in reverence by multitudes of his countrymen that he could meet them in the fields, and speak

to them words of counsel and rebuke without fear of interruption. According to the terms of the Royal Proclamation, he was "a traitor," "a flagitious and scandalous person," "a wretched impostor," while the meetings he addressed were "nurseries of sedition and rendezvous of rebellion," but according to a more enlightened and charitable judgment, he was an able and faithful minister of Jesus Christ, who counted not his life dear unto him that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God. As for his hearers, too,

> "Every hour
> They stood prepared to die: a people doomed
> To death: old men and youths and simple maids."

CHAPTER V.

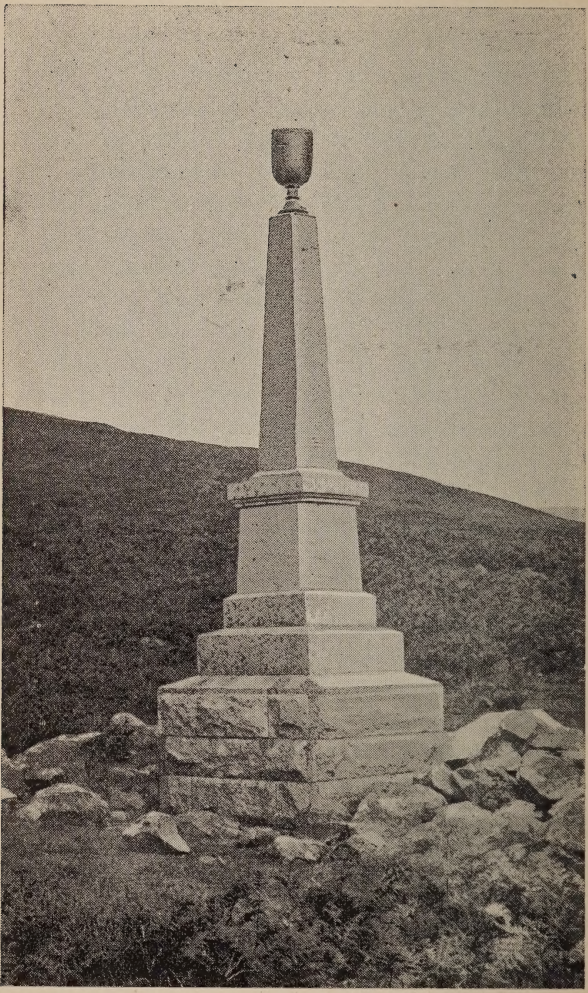
Indulgences—opposition in Galloway—cruel slanders—the Informatory Vindication.

By the beginning of 1687 a change had already begun to make itself manifest in the relations between the King and his subjects. There was nothing James so much desired as the conversion of both kingdoms to Popery, and for a time he seems almost to have expected it. To accomplish

his purpose more effectually he began by filling the chief offices of State with Roman Catholics, and to prepare his subjects for these changes he published an Indulgence in favour of all dissenters. Under this many thousand Papists and twelve thousand Quakers were released from prison. In England a revived Court of Ecclesiastical Commission had been created by royal edict in defiance of an Act of Parliament, which Court was not inaptly described as the College *de Propaganda Fide*, transferred from Rome to London. His measures gave just offence to the Anglican party, but they secured the support of a large number of unsuspecting Nonconformists, who were charmed with the idea of universal toleration. Having thus to some extent succeeded in England, James turned his attention to Scotland and sought to curry favour with the Presbyterians whom hitherto he had so cruelly abused. On the 12th of February he published a Proclamation at Edinburgh, granting them permission to meet for worship *in their own houses*, but forbidding them to use a barn or outhouse for religious services, and distinctly intimating that if they dared to hold conventicles in the fields, the law which denounced death against both preachers and hearers would be enforced without delay. This Proclamation was renewed with slight alterations on the 28th of June and

the 5th of October; in each case Renwick and his friends, who for conscientious reasons rejected the Indulgence, being handed over unmercifully to condemnation and death. Indeed their condition became now more cruel and painful than ever, the concentrated force of the Government being directed against them, while at the same time they were regarded by their Presbyterian brethren who had accepted the Indulgence as troublers in Israel. "In less than five months after the Toleration," says Alexander Shields, "there were fifteen most desperate searches, particularly for him, both of foot and horse, in which they were very outrageous, breaking into cellars and breaking down the ceilings of houses in their search for him." The larger amount of liberty enjoyed by the moderate Presbyterians was thus obtained only at the expense of greater severity to the persecuted. This, however, did not prevent Renwick from responding to the numerous calls which reached him from all parts of the land. Unhappily, his visits occasionally assumed a somewhat too personal character, being occasioned by unfriendly and unfair reports which he found it necessary to expose and refute. Thus in one letter he says :—

"I met with no small opposition in Galloway. I went to that shire, and preached there; a great many were vexed, and did their utmost to oppose it. When I came



MONUMENT ON SKEOCH HILL, IRONGRAY, NEAR COMMUNION STONE.

to Kirkmabreck, there came two men and gave me a paper, subscribed by one in Carrick, in name of all therein between Cree and Dee,* and also in the name of the whole ; which paper overturns many noble pieces of our Reformation, calling hearing of curates, paying of cess, and swearing the Abjuration Oath, debatable principles and above their capacity to determine. It bears also a viperous protestation against my preaching, besides many other absurdities in it, which when I read I gave my animadversion upon it before the two men. On the Thursday following we kept a public day meeting in the fields, between Cree and Dee. I thought fit after lecture, which was one upon the 15th Psalm, and sermon which was upon the Song of Solomon ii. 2, to read over the paper before the multitude, that I might let them know what was done in their name, giviug my own animadversions upon the same, and exhorting them if any such were there who had given their countenance and concurrence to it that they would speedily with sorrow draw back their hand from such an iniquity. Those who were free to take their protestation before the Lord that they were innocent and did resent the doing of such a deed in their name ought to do so. Withal, I warned them of the dangerousness of that course, and of the spirit of that party. Likewise when 1 came to Irongray, Cornlee came unto me, and before some few who were meeting for examination, and some others who accompanied me in my travels, he took instruments against me, and against my entering into Irongray." †

* Two rivers in the south of Scotland.

† A parish in Galloway, of which the Rev. John Welsh was minister, and where a few years before the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was dispensed in the open air to about three thousand communicants.

Thus, in the words of Alexander Shields, his friend and biographer already quoted, "the keenest, most cruel, and most constant persecution . . was the persecution of tongues, and of *their* tongues especially who sometimes said the same thing and were embarked in the same cause with himself. . . Yea, so incessant and successful were they with their whisperings that to his greatest grief they so far insinuated themselves into his most endeared familiars, as to incense them also against him, and not only to induce them to entertain but to engage them also to express invectives against him." Even the Rev. Alexander Peden, between whom and Renwick there had existed the warmest affection, was so far influenced thereby as to become for a time his enemy. When dying, however, he sent for him, and after some conversation said—"You have answered me to my soul's satisfaction, and I am very sorry that I should have believed any such ill reports of you, which have not only quenched my love and marred my sympathy, but made me express myself so bitterly against you, for which I have sadly smarted. But, Sir, ere you go you must pray for me, for I am old and going to leave the world." This having been done by Renwick, Peden took him by the hand and kissed him, and said—"Sir, I find you a faithful servant to your master; go on in single

dependence upon the Lord, and you will win honestly through and cleanly off the stage when many others that hold their head high will fall and lie in the mire, and make foul hands and garments." He then prayed that the Lord would strengthen, support and comfort him in all duties and difficulties. Such is Patrick Walker's graphic description of one of the most touching scenes in the life of these two holy men.

So persistent indeed were the attempts at this time to malign the character and misrepresent the opinions of Renwick and his friends, that, with the help of Alexander Shields, he prepared and published the *Informatory Vindication*, of which we now propose to give a brief resumè, and which reveals his excellent qualities both of head and heart. It was written at Leadhills in the Upper Ward of Lanarkshire at the beginning of the year 1687, and having been taken to Holland by Shields and printed there, was brought back to Scotland and sold "at eightpence per book and at sevenpence unstitched." We learn this from a Society minute of date December 7th, 1687. Renwick refers to it in the month of July when writing to Sir Robert Hamilton :—

"I would gladly hear if you have seen the Vindication, and what are your thoughts of it ; and if you and Mr. Alexander Shields have met, and how you have

accorded. I am hopeful, if you did not mistake one another, there would be little or no dissension between you."

This interesting document, which was considered and approved at a General Meeting at Friarminion, a lonely farm-house six or seven miles to the north of Kirkconnell, is divided into three parts :—

I. The Introduction, in which are described "some signal steps of our Church's defection, which from time to time some have witnessed against."

II. The Declaration of the present state of our Testimony, "shewing (1) what we maintain and positively own as the matter of it, and (2) what we disown as prejudicial thereunto and inconsistent therewith."

III. Our Vindication from many calumnies "cast upon us by some brethren who have left us, represented in several Heads." These Heads or Chapters are seven in number, and contain the principal accusations that were made against Renwick and his friends ; and what we purpose to do is to state each accusation or charge, and then refute it briefly in Renwick's own words.

1. Concerning the general meetings, in which matters both of Church and State are said to be handled *judicially.* After denying the assumption on their part of magisterial power, Renwick observes :—"Yet after we had considered what would be best, or contribute most to the securing of ourselves and religion, we judged it lawful, expedient, and necessary, to join together into one meeting all the particular Societies who were of one judgment and practice, in reference to the matter of our stated Testimony, by formal consent, for mutual help and correspondence." He then describes the method of their procedure, which seems to us to have been orderly and deliberate and perfectly reasonable, adding these significant words, "everyone is to take sufficient time to inform themselves, and deliberate about the thing, before we proceed to any determination, that so things may not be carried on rashly and hand over head, but a right way followed and no sudden nor unwarrantable division occasioned."

2. Concerning the Declarations, particularly those published at Sanquhar and Lanark, which are unjustly charged with the assumption of a Judicial or Erastian supremacy. "Therefore to remove such a charge, we in general plainly declare that we never did, neither do look upon these as authoritative actions, and as such extended

over and binding the whole land . . but as Declarations published in the name of those who adhere and consent with us in the matter of the Testimony." "We maintain it as both righteous and rational, in defence of our lives, liberties, and religion, after an orderly and Christian manner, to endeavour by all means lawful and possible to defend ourselves, rescue our brethren and prevent their murder, in a martial opposition against wicked persecutors, who are daily seeking to destroy their sons and imbrue their hands in our blood." "We adhere unto the Testimony then and there given, as not improper for or inconsistent with persons in our capacity to give it, though we wanted the concurrence of great ones. For we think, indeed, great men when faithful are great helps and fit instruments under God for promoting the common cause; but their simple absence doth not altogether incapacitate or invalidate the faithful endeavours of a remnant, adhering to the Reformation, and keeping their integrity, to maintain and promote the same, in such circumstances as we in this land are in. For this is our radical right and not the donative of princes or dependent of greatness. At the furthest, great men are for the wellbeing, not simply necessary for the being of armies, commonwealths, or societies; we mean those who are strictly called the first or nobles of the kingdom by birth

and not ennobled by qualifications and endowments. Indeed, where excellency of virtue and nobility of blood meet together, the persons are much to be preferred, but simple birth gives little right."

3. Concerning the first joint and written call given to ministers. This is objected to as "imposing sinful and unlawful restrictions." Renwick answers :—"We require nothing either of ministers or professors, but that which, antecedently to our humble desire, is bound over both upon them and us, in our places and stations, divinely by the authority of God's Word, and ecclesiastically by the subordinate authority of our Church constitutions. Therefore, what we require consent and agreement unto, let it be first brought unto the Word of God, which is the only rule of faith and manners, and compared with the laudable degrees of reformation already attained unto, according to our Covenants and Church Constitutions founded upon the same Word; and if it be not agreeable thereunto, expressed therein, or necessarily consequential therefrom, let it be rejected. But if consonant thereunto, let no man call it our sinful imposition or restriction."

4. Concerning that heavy, though false charge of casting off the ministry, and schismatical separation from the ministers of the Church of

Scotland. "We distinguish between a faithful and a sinless ministry. The former we have ground to expect, but in no case the latter. For want of the former qualification we have ground to withdraw, that is, when they are not faithful; but from none because they are not sinless." After mentioning several insufficient and also several sufficient reasons for withdrawal, Renwick sums up this thorny and difficult question in nine distinct propositions. (1) We find these are not to be acknowledged as Christ's ambassadors by hearing or receiving ordinances from them, who either never had a call to preach, or never were clothed with Christ's commission in His orderly-appointed way. (2) We judge these are not to be owned or countenanced in their administration of ordinances, who either have subjected their ministry to the disposal of strange lords by laying it aside in obedience to their mandates, or taking a new potestative mission from them. (3) We judge we have sufficient ground to withdraw from all these who pervert and corrupt their ministry by preaching and maintaining errors either in doctrine, worship, discipline, or government, contrary to the Scriptures and our Confessions and principles of our Covenanted Reformation, and contradictory to our present Testimony, founded thereupon and agreeable thereunto. The other six propositions include (1) those guilty of

gross compliances with the public enemies of the Church and nation; (2) those who excuse and defend such courses; (3) those unfaithful in the exercise of their ministerial functions, or who have a smooth flattering general way of applying the doctrine to the times; (4) those who desert their ministerial duty, when the people's necessity is so great; (5) those who sow discord among brethren and promote their contentions by invidious reproaches or otherwise; (6) those who are guilty of scandalous disorders and miscarriages, either in the ministerial or personal walk and conversation. From all such Renwick defends his right to withdraw his fellowship, without being guilty of schism. He then adds—"We do not look upon all these ministers that we withdraw from, upon more or fewer of the foresaid grounds to be no ministers, yea or no more ministers of the Church of Scotland, or that their pastoral acts are invalidate or null; but only that we cannot lawfully embrace them as our ministers, and concur with them in the public work, as they are now circumstanced."

5. Concerning our delegating and commissioning some to represent our case to foreign Reformed Churches, and our sending some young men to the study of Theology in the Netherlands. As the latter part of this charge concerned Renwick himself, we shall give his

answer at greater length. "As to the ordination of one of these young men it is to be considered (1) That when he went abroad he was not in a capacity for being ordained, nor any way accomplished for offering himself to previous Trials; (2) There was then no hope of ordination here in Scotland to any one who agreed with us in all the parts of our Testimony, neither could it be safely sought after upon the foresaid consideration; (3) Though the Classis of Groningen, by which he was ordained, differs from the Church of Scotland, in her best times, in some things, yet considering that . . . in the act of ordination they did obtrude none of these differences but did take him engaged to teach according to the Word of God and the Confession of Faith of the Church of Scotland and the discipline thereof, it was thought lawful to accept of ordination from the foresaid Classis." "As the foresaid Classis did not hereby assume any authority to the detriment of the Church of Scotland, so the Church of Scotland did never monopolise to herself the sole power of ordination of all that would officiate in her service, in a broken state of the Church; neither did reject or invalidate the ordination of any sister Church, lending her helping hand in the case of her necessity."

6. Concerning the Protestation given against the Scottish congregation at Rotterdam. This Protestation had been occasioned by some unjust charges brought against Renwick and his fellow-students at Groningen, as well as against the Societies which had sent them thither. While admitting that there were some expressions in it which he regretted, Renwick defends the document as a whole.

7. Concerning the charge of making canons or rules in which are expressed the qualifications of the members of general meetings and Societies and the trying of scandalous persons. In rebutting the first part of this charge Renwick distinguishes between a Church fellowship which is Catholic or Universal, and an ecclesiastical fellowship among the members of a particular Church. To the latter we may justly attach stricter conditions and qualifications than to the former. Regarding the second accusation he says: "We by no means judge it lawful to commit unto the people the power of discipline, no more than it is lawful for them to preach and administer the Sacraments. Yea, so far are we from that sectarian principle that under no consideration whatsoever we judge it warrantable to assert that radically and originally the power of Church government is seated in the people, and from them delivered unto the pastors and elders

as it is in civil government, which cometh from God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, and is radically seated in the people and from them derived unto and conferred upon their magistrates and civil governors; whereas ecclesiastical government cometh from Christ, the Mediator and King of His Church, and by Him is immediately conferred upon the rulers and officers of His House, with whom He hath promised His presence unto the end of the world."

Having thus dealt with these charges, he brings his book to an end with this closing sentence: "Finally, we add no more, but desire that this be taken as the unbosoming of the genuine thoughts, and exhibiting the mind and sentiments (as to the controversies of the present time) of a poor, wasted, wounded, affiicted, bleeding, misrepresented, and reproached Remnant and Handful of suffering people, who desire to throw down what God will tnrow down, and to build what He will establish when He comes: to Whom be the kingdom and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

CHAPTER VI.

Conventicles—narrow escape at Peebles—arrest and trial—execution.

RENWICK'S life was now rapidly drawing to a close. In the month of September we find him present at a conventicle near Lochwinnoch, probably on the celebrated Craigminnan hill between Lochwinnoch and Kilmalcolm. This was a favourite place for conventicles, the spot which was used for worship being situated on a beautiful green hill, a little nearer the Lady Muir than Craigminnan. In November we find him in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, while on the last week of December he had a narrow escape at Peebles, to which he refers in a letter of date December 29th, 1687:—

"I have been at Peebles this week, and through the Lord's providence wonderfully escaped. Our intended meeting near to the town, about nine of the clock at night, in the time of our gathering was by a strange providence discovered. It is a place I had not been in before, and we had no armed men. There are four taken and imprisoned."

In a letter written a fortnight later, he gives more particulars regarding this escape, and also intimates his intention to be less anxious in future to conceal his place of abode:—

"I came forward to Peebles, where our meeting in the time of gathering was discovered by a wonderful providence—namely, as I am informed, the pursuing of some for theft, when people were observed to crowd out of the town, which made the Clerk to enquire what they were and whither they were going. The report whereof coming unto me, being lodged in a most suspected house, I went forth and passed on towards the place of meeting, until I came within speaking and hearing of the Clerk and of some with him, who were without the town challenging people. And being in no capacity to resist, I turned again into the town, where there was some little uproar, and went forth of it another way, where I waited a considerable space for my horse which was at length got unto me with some difficulty. Finding that the meeting could not be kept, I came away ; but there were four persons taken. Since I came to this place I have lodged with Thomas and John, and lest I should trouble mine own spirit I have not desired any to keep silent anent my being here, nor reproved any for coming into my quarters, whatever the hazard might be. I have left that to the providence of God, and people to their own discretion, and I find it not the worst way."

Leaving Peebles, he proceeded to Edinburgh, where a week later he presided at two conventicles on the Braids. He also lodged with the Moderator of the Edinburgh Presbytery a protest against the Toleration, which he wished to be laid before an early meeting of the Indulged ministers. Crossing into Fife, he held numerous conventicles there, preaching on the 24th from Psalm xlv., 10, and on the 22nd from

Luke xii. 32. His last sermon was at Bo'ness on the 29th of the same month from Isaiah liii. 1, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed." In this sermon after referring to the recent Toleration or Declaration of Indulgence as "evil and sinful" because founded on absolute power and meant to introduce idolatry into the land, he proceeded to answer some questions regarding it:—

"1. Some of you will say they are good men who have accepted and embraced this Toleration, and why may we not then hear them?"

"*Answer.*—I grant that many of them are godly and gracious men, but their acceptance of this anti-Christian liberty is no part of their godliness. They must not be countenanced in their sin, though they were never so godly, for their being so makes their sin the more heinous.

"2. Some may say, It is a great mercy to have liberty to preach the Gospel, and having such a liberty should we not make use of it?

"*Answer.*—I grant it is a great mercy to have the Gospel preached with freedom, and when we have it so we ought rightly to improve it. But I deny that the present liberty is such, for by it the Gospel is in great bondage, and truth in more thraldom than before it was granted, though the persons of such men as accept it have some more liberty. For it is such a liberty as comes from the fountain of absolute power, which is the alone incommunicable prerogative of Jehovah. Yet the granter of this liberty takes this to himself, and requires all his subjects to observe it without reserve. And it is

such a liberty as restricts ministers in their doctrine, for they are thereby enjoined that they preach nothing that may any ways tend to alienate the hearts of this people from the granter or his Government. It is such a liberty that those who accept of it do change the holding of their ministry, which they profess they had from Christ, and make it dependent on the courts of men. It is such a liberty as hath for its design the bringing in of idolatry into the land again.

"3. Some may say, What shall we do then? Better that we hear those who have accepted this liberty than hear none.

"*Answer.*—It is greatly your duty to hear any faithful minister, whenever you can have the opportunity; but it doth not follow that ye should hear the accepters of this woful liberty. For in the circumstances that we stand, we cannot do it without sin, and we are commanded to 'cease to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.'

"4. Some may say, Is it not better to take a part than to want all? If we were assaulted by a robber for our purse, is it not better to give him a part than to let him take it all.

Answer.—I shall not debate what a man may do when assaulted by a robber for his purse, seeing that in many cases a man may do with his own what he pleases, but he may not do so with the things of God. In these we should hold fast and let nothing go, seeing they are not our own. . . And a minister that would be faithful to his Master and free of the blood of souls should and must make particular application of his doctrine to the sins, snares, duties, and dangers of the time, whoever be offended. For ofttimes the life of preaching lies in the application of the doctrine.

"5. Some may say, Should we not hear them that we may be edified thereby?

Answer. If any get edification, it will be those who come in the sincerity of their souls, not knowing nor seeing the evil of this liberty, or who are in a great measure ignorant of the controversy of the day. Those who see something of the sins and snares of it, and are not ignorant of the controversy of the time, may expect but little benefit by them."

Returning to Edinburgh two days after this visit to Bo'ness, Renwick lodged in the house of a friend on the Castle Hill of Edinburgh, where his voice was overheard in prayer and recognised. Next morning an attempt was made to arrest him, but escaping from the house he ran down the Castle Wynd to the head of the Cowgate, where he was seized and given over to the guard. Graham, the captain of the guard, on seeing him exclaimed, "What! is this boy Mr. Renwick that the nation has been so much troubled with?" After being carried before a quorum of the Council, he was committed to prison, where at once in prayer he made an offer of himself freely to God, asking in particular that the enemies' cruelty might be so far restrained as to do nothing more against his body than to take his life. Possessing a highly-strung sensitive temperament, he had suffered much from the fear of torture, and had often wondered if he would be able to remain faithful unto death. This request,

which he now specially made to God, was gratified even beyond expectation, and on the day before his death he was able to say to some dear friends, "I have found His Cross sweet and lovely unto me; for I have had many joyful hours and not a fearful thought since I came to prison. He has strengthened me to brave man and face death, and I am now longing for the joyful hour of my dissolution; and there is nothing in the world I am sorry to leave but you, but I go to better company." To his mother also, who exclaimed in fear and trembling, "How shall I look upon that head and these hands, set up among the rest, upon the ports of the city," he smiled and said, "You shall never see that, for I have offered my life to the Lord, and have sought that He will bind them up that they may do no more; and I am much persuaded that they shall not be permitted to torture my body, nor touch one hair of my head farther!"

While in prison he was more concerned about others than himself, fearing lest through the severity of his examination and the threatened application of torture he might have betrayed any of his friends. To this he refers in the following letter to an unknown correspondent of date February 6th:—

"Dear Friend in the Lord,—I have no cause to complain of my lot: there is a great necessity for it, and the

Lord hath seen it for His glory, and He maketh me joyful in it. But there is one thing that doth a little trouble me, and yet when I look upon it again I think there is not much cause of trouble. The matter is this. When I was apprehended and searched, there was found upon me a little memorandum, containing the names of some persons, to whom I had lent, and from whom I had borrowed some books, as also a direction of letters to some doctors of divinity, or ministers abroad. Upon this I was interrogated in the tolbooth, by a committee, who said they had orders to torture me if I was not ingenuous. So as to the direction to the doctors, or ministers abroad, which were full in the memorandum, I told them that there was a purpose of writing letters to them, but that none were written. Being asked about the scope and design of the letters, I told them that it was to represent our sufferings, and to procure their sympathy. It was asked me, with whom I kept correspondence abroad? I told them with Mr. Robert Hamilton, which, I thought, could do no injury. As to the names of other persons, which were written short, I judged there was no hazard in explaining their names, who were in the same hazard already. So I told them that A. S. was Alexander Shields; and being asked if he was in Scotland? I, thinking that his public preaching would not let him be hid, said I supposed he was, but told no definite place; that M. S. was Michael Shields, but told no place of his abode; that Ja. Wil. and Ar. Wil. was James and Archibald Wilson, and, being asked about the place of their abode, I answered only in Clydesdale; that C. A. was Colin Alison, but I spoke of no place of abode; that Peter R. was Peter Raining, for I thought he was without their reach; and being asked about his occupation and abode, I told them he trafficked within the border of England. Peter Aird's name was

written full, and being asked particularly about him, I told them he was a man of the country of New-mills, Galston, or Evandale, I knew not whether. James Colstoun's name was thus full, and being asked of his abode, I told them he lived in the Newtown of Galloway, or thereabout. You know the man, and this was true of him, wherever he is now. That M. was my mother, but spoke of no place of her abode. I was most pressed to tell who M. M. at Gl. was, with whom a hat was left; and I answered that I was not free to bring any other person into trouble, whatever they might do with me. They said that the business could not bring any into trouble, for they did not now proceed against folk for such matters; and that their design was only to save me from torture, which they could not do unless I would be ingenuous about that name. I answered that I would in no ways explain the name, unless they would not trouble the person. They said they would endeavour to prevent all trouble of that kind. Therefore I, thinking that the person's name was already among enemies in the place, and supposing there were some others of that name, and also conceiving that trouble upon that account could hardly be expected, they guessing that Gl. was Glasgow, I told the advocate alone that M. M. was Mrs. Millar. Her name was not set down in writing by their clerk as the rest were, and he hath no witnesses upon it; so I think it not probable that they can incur any injury, for I was not more particular.

Now, I shall say no more as to this, but only advise persons in my circumstances, either not to write such memorandums, or not to keep them upon them, which I did inadvertently and inconsiderately. You may communicate this to whom you think fit, especially to the persons concerned, but see that you take along with you all the circumstances. I studied to save myself from

lying, to preserve them from trouble, and to evade the threatened torture. I was pressed much to tell my haunts and abodes these several years by past; and I told them I sometimes resorted to John Lookup's house, where the officers came upon me, but further I would give them no notice; so I passed.

Now, if there be anything in this that may be offensive to friends, I seek their forgivenness for it; for if I had apprehended any sin in all this, or that any person would thereby incur injury, I would then, and now also, rather undergo all the threatened torture.

The keepers of the tolbooth have frequently told me of my having married the herd in the Leeps, and some persons in Pentland. Alexander Weir, who is with the Provost, told me of baptising a child to one —— Scott's husband, but I endeavoured to boast them out of it. As for my pocket-book, which contained only the sum of my two last sermons at Braid's Craigs, with the time and place, I owned such doctrine.

I have no further matters to write at the time, for I resolve to write some after this, which I would have more public than this. I desire that none may be troubled upon my behalf, but that they rather rejoice with him, who, with hope and joy, is waiting for his marriage, and coronation hour. I am, your friend and servant in the Lord,

JAMES RENWICK."

Between his arrest and execution he was three times before the Council, on all which occasions he conducted himself with remarkable calmness and courage. Indeed, his whole deportment made a deep and favourable impression on his judges, and doubtless helped to secure that

exemption from torture to which we have just alluded. On Wednesday, 8th February, he appeared before the Justiciary Court, and after hearing his indictment read he was asked by the Clerk whether he adhered to his former confessions, and admitted the charges made against him. At once he replied, "All, but where it is said I have cast off all fear of God; that I deny. For it is because I fear to offend God, and violate his law that I am here standing to be condemned." The first charge referred to his refusal to acknowledge the King's authority. In reference to this he replied, "I own all authority that hath its prescriptions and limitations from the Word of God, but cannot own this usurper as lawful king, seeing both by the Word of God such an one is incapable to rule, and likewise by the ancient laws of the kingdom, which admit none to the Crown of Scotland until he swear to defend the Protestant religion, which a man of his profession cannot do." The second charge concerned his refusal to pay "cess" to his majesty. Replying to this he said, "For the present cess, enacted for the present purpose, I hold it unlawful to pay it, both in regard to its oppression on the subjects, for the maintenance of tyranny, and because it is imposed for suppressing the gospel. Would it have been thought lawful for the Jews, in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, to have brought every

one a coal to augment the flame of the furnace to devour the three children, if so they had been required by that tyrant? And how can it be lawful to oppress poor people for not bowing to the idols the king sets up, or for their brethren to contribute what may help forward their oppression upon that account?" In reference to the third charge that he had taught his hearers to appear in arms at their meetings, and in case of opposition to resist, he replied, "It were inconsistent with reason and with religion both to do otherwise; yourselves would do it in the like circumstances. I own that I taught them to carry arms and defend themselves, and to resist your unjust violence."

Having been found guilty, and sentence having been passed that he should be executed in the Grassmarket on the following Friday, he was asked by the Justice-General if he desired a longer term to prepare for death. To this he replied that it was all one to him; his Master's time was the best. Without his knowledge, and after he had openly refused to apply for it, a reprieve was obtained for a week, and urgent efforts were made to shake his constancy. He was visited in prison by the Lord Advocate, Bishop Paterson, several of the Indulged ministers, and even Popish priests, all of whom sought in vain to induce him to recant, or even, without a

formal renunciation of his Testimony, to apply for his pardon and release. But God's grace was sufficient for him, and His strength was made perfect in weakness. To his mother and sisters, who alone of all his friends had access to him at this time, he frequently expressed his sense of God's presence, and of His sustaining and comforting grace. Once when his mother asked him how he was, he answered "Well; but since my last examination I can hardly pray." Then seeing a look of distress, he at once relieved her by adding that he could hardly pray, "being so much taken up with praising and ravished with the joy of the Lord."

On the morning of his execution, the chief keeper of the prison visited him in his cell, and requested him not to mention the cause of his death nor to say anything on the scaffold that might be irritating to the authorities. To this he at once replied that what God would give him to speak that he would speak, and nothing else and nothing less. The jailor then told him that he might have his life yet, if he would but sign the petition which he offered to him. This Renwick declined to do, and with difficulty obtained permission for his mother and sisters to remain with him a little longer. While seated together at table, he first asked a blessing on the food provided, after which, among other things, he

said, "I have many times counted the cost of following Christ, but never expected it would have been so easy. . . . Now I am near the end of time I desire to bless the Lord; it is inexpressibly sweet and satisfying peace to me, that he hath kept me from complying in the least with enemies." Perceiving his mother weep, he exhorted her "to remember that they who love anything better than Christ are not worthy of Him. If you love me," he continued, "rejoice that I am going to my Father to obtain the enjoyment of what eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive."

At length, hearing the drum beat for the guard, he cried out, as in a transport, "Yonder is the welcome warning to my marriage: the Bridegroom is coming: I am ready, I am ready." Taking an affectionate leave of his mother and sisters, he exhorted them not to be discouraged, assuring them that, ere all was done, they would see matter for praise in that day's mercy. Around the scaffold a great multitude had assembled, but the authorities, afraid of the effect of his words upon the people, took measures to render these almost inaudible. From his first appearance until the close of the awful tragedy, the drums were beat without intermission, so that only those who stood close to him could hear

almost a word of what was said. After singing the 103rd Psalm, and reading the 19th chapter of Revelation, he engaged in prayer, complaining however that he was hindered in his endeavour to worship the Lord. "By and by," he said, "I shall be above those clouds; then I shall enjoy Thee and glorify Thee without interruption or intermission for ever." Prayer being ended, he addressed the people to the following effect. We give this address in the words of his friend and biographer, the Rev. Alexander Shields:—

"Spectators, or if there be any among you auditors, I must tell you I am come here to lay down my life for adhering to the truths of Christ, for which I am neither afraid nor ashamed to suffer. Nay, I bless the Lord that ever he counted me worthy, or enabled me to suffer anything for Him; and I desire to praise His grace, that He hath not only kept me free from the gross pollutions of the times, but also from the many ordinary pollutions of children: and for such as I have been stained with, He hath washed and cleansed me from them in His own blood.

"I am this day to lay down my life for these three things:—

"(1) For disowning the usurpation and tyranny of James, Duke of York. (2) For preaching that it was unlawful to pay the cess expressly enacted for the bearing down of the Gospel. (3) For teaching that it was lawful for people to carry arms for defending themselves in their meetings for the persecuted gospel ordinances. I think a testimony for these is worth many lives; and if

I had ten thousand, I would think it little enough to lay them all down for the same. . . ,

"I leave my testimony against Popery, Prelacy, and Erastianism: against all profanity and everything contrary to sound doctrine and the power of godliness: against all usurpations and encroachments made upon Christ's rights, Who alone must bear the glory of ruling His own kingdom, the Church: and in particular, against the absolute power, usurped by this usurper, that belongs to no mortal, but is the incommunicable prerogative of Jehovah: and against this Toleration flowing from this absolute power—— " Here he was interrupted and told he must stop; and after a few more words of earnest Christian exhortation, he ascended the ladder, where he prayed again and said—

"Lord, I die in the faith that Thou wilt not leave Scotland, but that Thou wilt make the blood of Thy witnesses the seed of Thy Church, and return again and be glorious in our land. And now Lord I am ready: the bride, the Lamb's wife hath made herself ready." The napkin being tied about his face, he uttered a few words of affectionate farewell to the friend who had been permitted to attend him, adding also these words in reference to his brethren: "As to the remnant I leave, I have committed them to God. Tell them from me not to weary nor be discouraged in maintaining the Testimony. Let them not quit nor forego one of these despised truths. Keep your ground, and the Lord will provide you teachers and ministers. And when He comes, He will make these despised truths glorious upon the earth."

Having given this message, he was turned over, with these words upon his lips: "Lord, into Thy hands I commit my spirit, for Thou hast redeemed me, Lord God of truth."

Thus died James Renwick, the last of the Scottish martyrs, on the 17th February, 1688, and within twelve months of his death the tyrant whose authority he had defied was an exile in a foreign land, while his throne was occupied by William and Mary, the chosen representatives of civil and religious liberty.

> "The mills of God grind slowly,
> But they grind exceeding small."

CHAPTER VII.

Closing estimate of character and opinions.

THE personal character of Renwick, and his extraordinary and self-sacrificing zeal in the cause of the Gospel, are above all praise. This was admitted even by his enemies, who, in some respects, were more generous in their judgment regarding him than some who had once posed as his friends and admirers. If, however, we would estimate his opinions and conduct aright, we must carry with us a remembrance of this important but too often forgotten principle that the roots of the present always lie deep in the past, and that the true significance of contemporary

events can be understood only by those who are familiar with their historical causes.

In one sense we are the heirs of all the ages, and this not in one thing but in everything. It would therefore be as unfair to judge Renwick and his opinions without taking account of the civil and ecclesiastical history of the period, and the previous Testimonies of like-minded men, as it would be to judge our own character and views apart from the march and movement of the century in which we live. Those, for example, who object to the political character of Renwick's preaching, and especially to his defence of an open and armed opposition to the law, must remember how impossible it was at that time to separate between politics and religion, and how cruel and oppressive was the tyranny which prevailed both in Church and State. Those, also, who object to a closer union among the Presbyterians of Scotland to-day, and who are disposed to serve themselves heirs to Renwick and his followers as the representatives of truth in the land, should not be allowed to forget how very different is the character of the age in which we live, and how wide in principle was the gulf which separated the Societies from those who accepted or condoned the acceptance of the Indulgence. That Renwick was not opposed to a union "bottomed upon the truth and cemented

with love" (as he expressed it), and that he even anticipated such a happy consummation of all their contendings and sufferings may be inferred from his own words on one occasion, "O! for that soul ravishing day, when we shall have union rightly qualified! I think that would be the Church of Scotland's restoration." Lamenting over the divisions among Christians, and longing for a closer fellowship with all good men, he exclaims with apostolic fervour, "O that the Lord's elect were agreeing in truth! O that all these that shall agree in heaven were agreeing upon earth. I think if my blood could be a means to procure it, I could willingly offer it up upon that account." Besides, in the *Informatory Vindication*, a careful distinction is drawn between a positive separation, involving the erection of a new church, and a negative separation which does not involve this. This negative separation is also divided into active and passive; and it is only this negative-passive separation that is acknowledged by the Societies, which did not claim to be a new and separate church, but only a number of private Christians meeting for mutual edification and defence.

We do not presume to say what exact position Renwick would have occupied in our present-day controversies; but, on the testimony of an Episcopal writer, his friends were those who had

studied their own principles most accurately, and had drawn from them such practical conclusions as these naturally and necessarily yield. "The whole nation," says this writer,* "knows, that those Presbyterians, whom he nicknames Cameronians, did assert their Presbyterian principles when others were very silent, and upon this they value themselves as the most pious, active, and ingenuous of the whole party, who differ not from others in their principles, but do exceed some of their brethren in higher degrees of zeal and sincerity to promote the interest of their combination. But pray! what is it that the Cameronians have done that they might not have done upon Presbyterian principles? For it is a recorded maxim amongst them that *the people* may (especially in conjunction with their pastors) reform the Church when the magistrate is slack or remiss in his duties, or opposite unto the designed Reformation. Now the removal of the Episcopal clergy upon their hypothesis was a necessary mean to advance this glorious Reformation." Thus does this Episcopal writer defend the Cameronians from the charge which some of their moderate brethren had brought against them, as though they alone had been responsible

* *An Apology for the Clergy of Scotland*, London, 1692.

for the violent changes effected by the Revolution Settlement. Whether this Settlement would ever have become an accomplished fact without their consistent and irreconcilable opposition is indeed very doubtful: but their treasonable conduct was confirmed and homologated by the Church and nation at large, which, therefore, in the opinion of the writer, became equally culpable, although to them belongs the honour of having acted as the forlorn hope, and by their steadfastness having secured the victory.

After all, however, what lay at the root of Renwick's character, both as a man and a preacher, was his passionate love for Christ and for the souls of men. This appeared in his preaching, which was singularly impressive, and often succeeded in moving the multitude to tears. One of his hearers who went sixteen miles to hear him testifies to his great piety, freedom, and moderation. The meeting was on a wide desolate moor. The minister appeared to have much of his Master's presence. His method was clear, plain, and well-digested, suiting the substance and simplicity of the Gospel.

We give also a longer and warmer testimony from one who was well acquainted with him, and who had for him an unqualified admiration both as a man and a minister :—

"The latter end of this year I heard that great man of God, Mr. James Renwick, preach; and there was one thing this day which was very remarkable to me, for though it was rain from morning till night, and we as wet as if drenched in water, yet not one fell sick; and though there was a tent fixed for him he would not go into it, but stood without in the rain and preached, which example had great influence on the people to patience, when they saw his sympathy with them. But now, with a grieved heart, I must bid a final farewell in time to this worthy minister and highly honoured martyr, for within two months he was apprehended and executed at Edinburgh. He was the only man that ever I knew that had an unstained integrity. He was a lively and faithful minister of Christ and a worthy Christian, such as none who were entirely acquainted with him could say any other but that he was a beloved Jedidiah of the Lord. I never knew a man more richly endued with grace, more equal in his temper, more equal in his spiritual frame, and more equal in walk and conversation. Many times when I have been thinking of the great Mr. Knox, Mr. Welsh, and others of our worthy Reformers, I have thought that the great Mr. James Renwick was as true and genuine a son of these great men as any that ever the Lord raised up in this land to contend for truth. He seemed to come upsides with them in soundness of principle, in straightness of practice, in meekness, in prudence, in zeal for the glory of God, in giving testimony for the truth and against sin and defection, so that though he was the Joseph that was sorely shot at and grieved, yet he was the Caleb that followed the Lord fully. When I speak of him as a man, none more comely in features, none more prudent, none more brave and heroic in spirit, yet none more meek, more humane and condescending. He was every way so

rational as well as religious that there was ground to think the powers of his reason were as much strengthened and sanctified as those of any mere man I ever heard of. His converse was pious, prudent, and meek; his reasoning and debating were the same, carrying along with them a full evidence of the truth of what he asserted, and for stedfastness in the way of the Lord few came his length. He learned the truth and counted the cost, and so sealed it with his blood." *

Frequent mention is made by those who heard him of the silvery tones of his voice, which reached and penetrated their hearts with a wonderfully persuasive power, while the contrast between his stern surroundings and his youth and gentle bearing helped to deepen the conviction that he was a man of God.

> " A frail slight form—no temple he
> Grand, for abode of Deity;
> Rather a bush, inflamed with grace,
> And trembling in a desert place,
> And unconsumed with fire,
> Though burning high and higher."

If, however, we would see this enthusiasm for Christ and humanity, we need only refer to such messages as the following, which we have culled from his letters :—

" Oh the full and sufficient satisfaction that is in the matchless pearl, Christ! He is all things desirable.

* Nisbet's *Mem.*, 18mo. p. 199, *et seq.*

Let us bestow all our love, our whole affections upon Him: and when we have done, let us wonder that He should seek and take it off our hands.

"When we win to His house above, and see Him as He is, we will be ashamed of all our babblings about Him. They that have been most ravished with His love, and most eloquent to speak forth His comeliness and properties, will see that they have been but, at best, babes learning to speak. Oh! what shall I say? He is the wonderful matchless and glorious inestimable jewel, and incomparable pearl of price!

"Oh! then, let us be altogether His and nothing our own; our time, let it be His; our understanding let it be His; our will let it be His; our affections let them be His; the travail of our souls let it be His; our names, lives, enjoyments, let them all be His; let us be fully surrendered and entirely consecrated unto Him."

"Now, that which I mainly desire is to commend unto the world the loveliness of Christ, the preciousness of His cause, the easiness of His yoke, and the sweetness of His cross, whereof I am sure you are not ignorant. But O this is a work above the reach of poor sinning finite creatures! Who can think, who can speak, who can write, of this? The immeasurableness and freedom of the grace of Christ, the boundlessness of His power and infiniteness of His love, are such a bottomless deep of joyful wonder, wherein those who are made perfect are everlastingly drowned."

Ample testimony has already been given to his marvellous courage and endurance, but these admirable qualities can be fully appreciated only when we bear in mind the weakness of his bodily frame, and the extent to which he suffered

from his privations and hardships. In a letter to Sir Robert Hamilton, written during the last year of his life, the following touching statement is made, in no murmuring or discontented spirit, but with all the confidence of friendship :—

"My business was never so weighty, so multiplied, and so ill to be guided, to my apprehension, as it hath been this year, and my body was never so frail. Excessive travel, night wanderings, unseasonable sleep and diet, and frequent preaching in all seasons of weather, especially in the night, have so debilitated me that I am often incapable for any work. I find myself greatly weakened inwardly, so that I sometimes fall into fits of swooning and fainting. I seldom take any meat or drink but it fights with my stomach ; and for strong drink I can take almost none of it. When I use means for my recovery, I find it someways effectual; but my desire to the work, and the necessity and importunity of people, prompts me to do more than my natural strength will well allow, and to undertake such toilsome business as casts my body down again. I mention not this through any anxiety, quarrelling, or discontent, but to show you my condition in this respect. I may say that, under all my frailties and distempers, I find great peace and sweetness in reflecting upon the occasion thereof; it is a part of my glory and joy to bear such infirmities, contracted through my poor and small labour, in my Master's vineyard."

Evidently Renwick was not one of the favoured few who have been fortunate enough, according to De Quincey, in the lottery of life to draw the

dual prize of a keen intellect and a system innocent of even a suspicion of dyspepsia! On the contrary, many a thorn in the flesh had been given to him; yet could he confidently say with the Apostle, "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong."

As we bid farewell to this young and faithful martyr of Jesus Christ, and to the interesting period in the history of our Church and country with which his name is so closely and honourably associated, let it with the determination to imitate his consistency and courage, and to follow him in so far as he followed Christ. Other questions have now to be considered and disposed of than those to which he devoted his life. But the spirit by which he was animated is still required of us if we would succeed in our conflict with evil. Therefore in the words of the "Hora Novissima," the loveliest of mediæval hymns, we say in closing to all our readers—

"The world is very evil,
The times are waxing late,
Be sober and keep vigil,
The Judge is at the gate;
The Judge that comes in mercy,
The Judge that comes in might,
To terminate the evil,
To diadem the right.

"Arise, arise, good Christian,
Let right to wrong succeed,
Let penitential sorrow
To heavenly gladness lead;
To the light that hath no evening,
That knows nor moon nor sun,
The light both new and golden,
The light that is but One.

"And when the Sole-begotten
Shall render up once more
The Kingdom to the Father,
Whose own it was before,
Then glory yet unheard of
Shall shed abroad its ray,
Resolving all enigmas,
An endless Sabbath-day."

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—Rev. ii. 10.

APPENDIX.

NAMES OF THE JURY AT RENWICK'S TRIAL.

James Hume of Kimmergame.
John Hume of Nine-wells.
John Martin, clerk.
Alexander Martin of Kessilaw.
Robert Haliburton, merchant.
Thomas Lawrie, merchant.
Archibald Johnston, merchant.
Thomas Wylie, merchant.
James Hamilton, vintner.
William Cockburn, merchant.
James Hamilton, stationer.
Robert Currie, stationer.
John Cunningham, merchant in Glasgow.
William Somervel, chamberlain in Douglas.
Ninian Banantyne of Kaims, chancellor to the Assize.

These 15 had been chosen from a list of 45 persons, who had been given him as his assize, some of whom were themselves objects of suspicion to the Government. The practice of selecting such, which was not uncommon, and which was in perfect keeping with the

refined cruelty of the persecutors, was meant either for the purpose of punishing those who refused to obey the summons, or of exposing those who did compear to the suspicion and dislike of their brethren. On the present occasion, one of the 45 was Sir John Maxwell of Nether-Pollock, who had himself suffered heavily both from fine and imprisonment; while another was William Somervel of Douglas, who, though at first he compeared and answered to his name, no sooner saw Renwick turn about and direct his speech to the assizers than he ran away, and thereby forfeited his 200 merks. He trembled to think to take away the life of such a pious-like man, though they should take his whole estate from him—such was his own explanation of his sudden flight.

IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS.

First Meeting of the United Societies, 15th Dec., 1681
Lanark Declaration, ... 12th Jan., 1682
Duke of Lauderdale died, ... 24th Aug., 1682
Renwick's Ordination, ... 10th May, 1683
Rye House Plot, ... July, 1683
Renwick's Apologetic Declaration, 8th Nov., 1684
Baillie of Jerviswood executed,... 24th Dec., 1684
Death of Charles II., ... 6th Feb., 1685
James VII. proclaimed at Edinburgh, 10th Feb., 1685
Murder of John Brown of Priesthill, 1st May, 1685
Argyll's Execution, ... 30th June, 1685
Monmouth's Defeat at Sedgemoor, 6th July, 1685
Monmouth's Execution, ... 15th July, 1685
Revocation of Edict of Nantes, ... 18th Oct., 1685
Anti-Popish Riot in Edinburgh, 31st Jan., 1686
James's Last Scottish Parliament Summoned, 29th April, 1686
Parliament Prorogued, ... 15th June, 1686
First Indulgence, ... 12th Feb., 1687
Second Indulgence, ... 28th June, 1687
A Third Indulgence, ... 5th Oct., 1687
Renwick's Execution, ... 17th Feb., 1688
William of Orange at Torbay, ... 5th Nov., 1688
James VII. embarked for France, 23rd Dec., 1688
William and Mary accepted the Crown, 13th Feb., 1689
Claverhouse killed at Killiecrankie, 27th July, 1689
Battle of the Boyne, ... 1st July, 1690

The Revolution of 1688.

"The part taken at this turning-point of Britain's history by the strict Covenanters or Cameronians was decided and eventful. Amongst the parties of the day they stood alone for energy, disinterestedness, courage, and unalloyed public zeal.

"In about six months from the martyrdom of James Renwick, the alarm rang through the country, that William of Orange was on his way to the British shores.

"Confining our view more particularly to Scotland, all was there consternation, confusion, helpless paralysis. The Scottish ministry, lately irresistible in their terrorism, with their prisons, racks, and scaffolds, were blasted as in a night, and fell into universal contempt. They kindled beacons on the hill-tops to rouse the people against the threatened invasion. The people, on the contrary, rejoiced in these blazing lights as the first morning beams of their own deliverance. The butchering troopers being called up to England by the King, the Ministry issued proclamation on the back of proclamation, summoning the militia. 'They called spirits from the vasty deep, but would they come?' The only response was mockery and laughter. The head-

torturers, Perth and all his sanguinary brood, fled headlong from the seat of power, and left Scotland without a government. The Cavalier or Royalist party were like men suddenly awakened in the midst of a shipwreck. A few retired sullenly to the poop, determined to go down with the vessel; but most of them were clutching at spars and splinters to carry them, if possible, to some place of safety. The Moderate Presbyterians, those who for the last thirty years had been edging as far as they could out of the sweep of persecution, and had been thankfully accepting indulgences and tolerations, and been denouncing their stricter co-religionists, vilifying Cargill and Cameron and Renwick, mingling in the hue and cry against the United Societies, and branding the Armed Conventicles in terms the most opprobrious; the Moderates, who, amid the upheaving shocks of Revolution, always affect a monopoly of wisdom, and are always to do such great things when the proper time comes, which proper time will be somewhere about the Greek kalends,—these Moderate Presbyterians were as prostrated and helpless as the Royalists. They had condemned and discouraged the use of arms, and had joined, open-mouthed, against the armed Cameronians as rebels and assassins; and now, without arms, without discipline, without con-

cert, and enfeebled by their own timid habits and their system of compliances contrary to their fundamental principles, they stood trembling and terrified like a flock of sheep, gazing wistfully at what might happen, but having no definite policy, and unable to originate any direct or active movement. In the meantime, William of Orange, though accompanied in his march with endless good wishes and complimentary addresses, had little real force to depend upon but his own fourteen thousand heavy and stubborn Dutchmen. And as regarded Scotland and Ireland, the Royalists were beginning to recover from their first fright, and to assume a very menacing attitude. Claverhouse was posting to Scotland to take command of his dragoons—commander and troops thoroughly matched—burning with wrath to crimson their swords once more in the blood of Scotland's peasantry.

"Was the country, then, to be plunged back, before it had well breathed, into the horrors from which there had seemed a prospect of escape? Was there to be no voice raised? no defence offered? Were no volunteers to start up for mother-land, and the national faith? Yes! the silence was suddenly broken; the nation was instantaneously revived and made to feel that she still had undegenerate sons. Clear

and loud as the clarion's sound—distinct, bold, and unwavering, from the wild mountain solitudes of Wanlockhead, long the haunt and refuge of the persecuted,—there issued a voice, when all others were mute. It was the voice of the *Cameronian Host!* And thus it spake:—'Duty and safety require that we should rise in a posture of defence, when all will be compelled to take a side and declare whom they are for. It will be a reproach, when the quarrel is for religion and liberty, if they, who have borne arms hitherto for the defence thereof, shall now lay them by as indifferent.'

"Listen to the well-known accents! The same voice in 1688 that was heard in 1638; the lapse of fifty years has neither cracked nor weakened its freedom-loving, tyranny-defying tones.

"The armed Cameronians modelled themselves into a military force. They were the first Volunteers in Britain who appeared for the Revolution of 1688. They—the persecuted, despised, maligned Cameronians—were called to Edinburgh to protect the Scottish Parliament, whilst deliberating on the transfer of the crown to William, against the perils which environed them from the plots of the Jacobites, who were mustering together under Claverhouse. For this inestimable service, they accepted the thanks of the Parliament, but refused any pay; they were

serving, not as mercenaries, but as men devoted by Covenant to the salvation of their country. And now that they had arms in their hands—in short, were the only army in Scotland, and had full scope to wreak retribution on their persecutors, to have at least one bloody week of vengeance for thirty years of nameless wrongs and horrors—did they break loose into Sicilian Vespers, or a repetition of St. Bartholomew's Day? No! but the United Societies, their authoritative body—as opposed to anarchy as to despotism—learning that here and there a disposition was manifested to 'rabble the curates,' published a Manifesto, which almost entirely put a stop to these comparatively trifling disturbances. 'Perceiving that some are too bent to take redress of wrongs rashly at their own hand, in doing whereof disorders may be committed whereby the cause, their brethren, and themselves will suffer reproach, we judge it expedient *that parties aggrieved should not at their own hand take redress, seeing there are now some hopes of getting wrongs redressed in a legal and orderly manner.*'

"And, finally, when the Revolution Government, though nationally recognised and sanctioned, was still infirm and precarious, and in urgent want of increased military force, especially in Scotland,—in the spring of 1689, without

bounty, without beat of drum, starting to their feet in a moment at the cry of their distressed mother-land, the Cameronians assembled, nine thousand strong, on Douglas Moor, the very gate into their western hills, those glorious ramparts of British freedom; and at once, without the least difficulty, and without any stimulus except a belief that the Revolution was in danger, and a determination to defend and establish it, they turned out a regiment of eight hundred brethren, ready armed, fit for the field, under the command of Lord Angus and William Cleland, the young hero of Drumclog. This was the origin of the celebrated *Cameronian regiment.* They further offered to the Government to raise and equip other regiments if required—and ultimately they consecrated 1200 brethren in all—to aid in securing, and placing beyond all danger of attack the newly-planted liberties of the country, civil and religious.

"Such was the part which the Cameronians performed in achieving the Revolution of 1688. These armed, and trained, and desert-bred, and God-covenanted legions were the legacy which Cameron and Renwick bequeathed to their country, when the hour struck for Britain's redemption, or her tenfold slavery for generations and generations to come."—Dodds' *Fifty Years' Struggle of the Scottish Covenanters.*

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